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Towards a New Realism

NATURALISM is played out. The masses of documented material, photographic, literal, unashamed, and unabridged, which have been the corpus of so much fiction in the last decade, grow tiresome. They are neither science nor history nor fine art. As evidence of the wounds and disorganization of society since the war they had their value, but will any one ever read again the fiction that was made of them? Not for pleasure certainly, not for ideas, not for the sustenance of the imagination. We must have either a new realism, or romance. Romance just now is frankly incredible. Our mood is wrong for it, and every effort in that direction stops short of excellence because it infallibly recalls a romantic tradition which seems to be on its last legs. There is no stimulus any more in Rousseau; the eighteenth century is already beginning to be more powerful in our minds than the nineteenth, except where habit and early training still prevail.

But what will be a new realism? There must be some new ideas of reality, and these can scarcely spring from the physicist's discovery of the insubstantiality of matter. They must concern society rather than atoms and be in opposition to modes of feeling and of thought out of accordance with what is actually happening in the human race.

A sociological philosopher of the twenties, the Italian Pareto, is being passed through American universities in rough English transcripts, or read in Italian or French. It is said that he provides a basis from which analysis can proceed and the imagination be set to work upon new structures. We hope soon to present in this *Review* a discussion of his work. Certainly a philosophic interpretation more subtle and more plastic than Marxism and more applicable to the mental problems of civilization than the researches of physical science, is bitterly needed. Like many a decade before us, we carry the ill-assorted baggage of the past on our shoulders, and the burden begins to grow intolerable, as burdens will when their usefulness grows doubtful. We must make up our minds about so many things, yet without some fixed principles to go on minds whirl like flywheels. The communists have put on a belt that hitches us to economic materialism. The fascists have another ready. Realism will study the nature and purpose and probable results of the load.

An able critic has suggested that the

(*Continued on next page*)

Motion Spurts

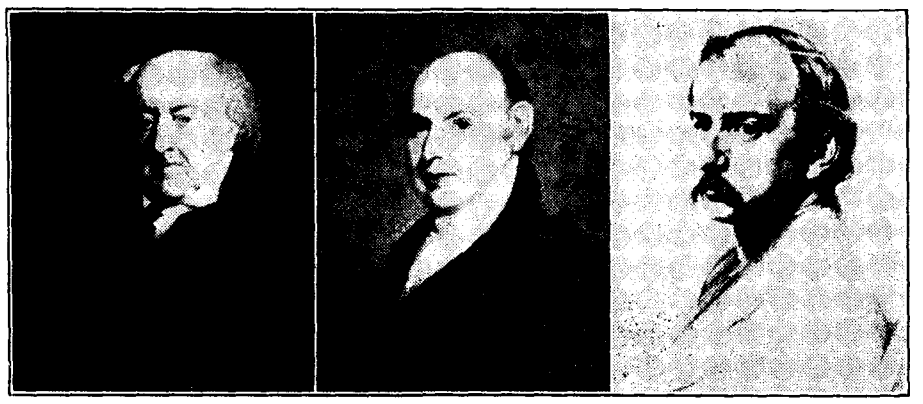
By JOHN PEALE BISHOP

FOR forty years, for forty one,
Sparing the profits of the sun,
This farmer piled his meagre hoard
To buy at last a rattly Ford.

Now crouched on a scared smile he feels
Motion spurt beneath his heels,
Rheumatically intent shifts gears
And loosens the joints of rustic years.

Now morning light obscures the stars,
He swerves avoiding other cars;
Wheels with the road, does not discern
He eastward goes at every turn.

Nor how his aged limbs are hurled
Through all the motions of the world,
While wild past farms, past ricks, past trees
He perishes toward Hercules.



THE ADAMS LINE—JOHN ADAMS, JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, HENRY ADAMS.

Henry Adams Once More*

By CARL BECKER

IT was said of Thiers that he concealed his opinion of Napoleon in twenty volumes; it might be said of Henry Adams that he wrote thirty volumes to provide posterity with a psychological puzzle. The puzzle is to find out why, having written all these admirable books, he believed, or professed to believe, that his life was a failure. Several explanations were offered on the occasion of the publication of his "The Education of Henry Adams"—that extraordinary book which leaves the reader certain of nothing except that Henry Adams, by his own account of it, never had an education. Unable to accept this palpable absurdity, I have long wished that someone would write a full length life of this most fascinating and perverse of the Adamses—a biography that would explain the autobiography, that would, in short, reveal the secret of Henry Adams. The announcement of a life by James Truslow Adams led me to hope that my wish had come true.

It turns out that Mr. Adams has not done quite what I had hoped, for the adequate reason that his book was "originally written for a collected edition of [Henry Adams's] Works," and is now published separately only because that enterprise had to be temporarily abandoned. Regarded in this light, his short sketch is admirable, a model of what an introduction to an edition of collected works should be. It is not too long. It gives, in chronological order, all the essential known facts about Henry Adams's life and activities, with just the sort of explanatory comment needed by one who might be using his collected works. In addition there emerges, from this running comment, a portrait of the man Henry Adams. The portrait is not, so to speak, painted and set up before us in any one chapter of the book; but the preliminary sketches from which we may compose it are to be found, scattered here and there, in the author's estimates of Adams's writings, the notation of his characteristic traits, and in many pertinent suggestions as to the motives that may have determined his less obvious actions, the frustrations that may in part explain his whimsical paradoxes, his obviously exaggerated self-depreciation. I find myself disagreeing with Mr. Adams's critical judgment only in two instances. I think he estimates too highly Henry Adams's disquisitions on history as a science, and I think he admires the "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres" for the wrong reasons. Unique and fascinating as the "Saint Michel" is, I cannot think it throws the "clearest and most concentrated light to be turned on the medieval period by any single volume in perhaps any language." Say rather that it throws a highly diffused, stained-glass light on the mind of Henry Adams.

Excellent as the book is for its original purpose, it is not as comprehensive a treatment as the subject deserves, or as Mr. Adams would no doubt have given it had he set out to write a biography in the usual sense. One would like, for example, a more detailed analysis of Henry Adams's "History of the United States," and a more searching criticism of those interesting works, "A Letter to Teachers of History," and "The Rule of Phase Applied to History." One would like, above all, a less fragmentary and casual, a more resolute attempt to formulate a closely integrated psychological interpretation of the life and personality of Henry Adams. Mr. Adams will perhaps shy off at the words "psychological interpretations." Call it what you will, the thing itself is in his book, despite his disclaimers. I shall not attempt," he says, "any biological inferences as to Henry Adams's inheritance nor any Freudian guesses as to his childhood." Again: "When one has to delineate a human soul from fragmentary documents, it is merely insolent egotism to claim that one has plumbed the depths." Surely no biographer can rightly claim, no sensible critic expect, so much. But after all a biographer, if he aims to "delineate a human soul," must somehow get beneath the surface meaning of the documents, fragmentary though they may be, and indeed always are. Mr. Adams does himself endeavor, neither inexpertly nor unsuccessfully, to do so. I suspect he is merely raising his voice a little as a warning to critics not to class him with the "debunkers." I don't ask him, or any one, to debunk Henry Adams, the less so since Henry Adams has, far better than any one else could do it, debunked himself.

Why should Henry Adams have felt it necessary to debunk himself? Why should he have employed all the resources of his sardonic humor, all his talent for paradox and allusive innuendo and recessive ironic overstatement, to make himself small? This is the very nub of the riddle; and one need not claim to have plumbed the depths to suggest, as a possible reading of it, that Henry Adams was impelled to debunk himself a little because he had in some sense "bunked" his life. Having resisted his genius and partly renounced his true

(*Continued on page* 524)

* Henry Adams. By JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS. New York: A. & C. Boni. 1933. $2.50.

Russia in Solution

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. By LEON TROTSKY. Vol. 2. The Attempted Counter-Revolution. Vol. 3. The Triumph of the Soviets. Translated by MAX EASTMAN. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1933. $7.

Reviewed by SIDNEY HOOK

THE second and third volumes of Trotsky's monumental "History of the Russian Revolution" completes the most significant historical study which has yet appeared in the twentieth century. It is a contribution of the first order not only to historiography but to literature, social psychology, and the philosophy of history as well. Not the least of its merits is the openness with which Trotsky reveals the inescapable bias of personality and perspective which enter into every historical reconstruction of the past. He does not strain after an impossible objectivity—a virtue which colorless and undistinguished historical narratives claim for themselves as compensation for having failed to achieve everything else. By candidly affirming his class allegiance, by explicitly stating the criteria of relevance and plausibility which have guided the selection of detail, and by refusing to be victimized by the scientific historian's prejudice that because human actions are determined, there is no point in attributing moral responsibility to historical agents and in passing judgments of value upon them—Trotsky places in his reader's hands the means by which the historical construction may be checked and criticized. The critical reader will often conclude that Trotsky is partial; never that he is arbitrary. And after all, the whole truth about anything—whatever that may mean—can only be grasped in a series of partial views.

No less important in an historian than a sense of evidence and the power of dramatic reconstruction is his philosophy of history. Trotsky is indisputably the most brilliant Marxist in the world today—a Marxist in blood, temperament, and concrete logic. His only weakness, consistently betrayed in all his writings, arises from an inadequate theoretical formula-

This Week

"THOMAS EAKINS."
Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER.

"MIKE FINK."
Reviewed by BERNARD DE VOTO.

"LAST POEMS" OF D. H. LAWRENCE.
Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

"MAN'S MORTALITY."
Reviewed by HENRY TRACY.

"SING BEFORE BREAKFAST."
Reviewed by ALVAH C. BESSIE.

"COUP D'ETAT."
Reviewed by W. Y. ELLIOTT.

"SPECIAL DELIVERY."
Reviewed by ROBERT MULLEN.

THE READER'S GUIDE.
Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER.

THE CRIMINAL RECORD.

Next Week, or Later

THE TREND OF THE TURN.
By ADOLF BERLE.

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tion of the philosophy of history by which he lives, and one which he applies with much mastery to the complex interplay of historical chronicle, social forces, and personality. Indeed, his specific analyses are sometimes incompatible with his avowed theory. This is true of the fundamental thesis of his book.

Trotsky would have us believe that the Russian revolution was inevitable. In the course of his narrative, however, he conclusively demonstrates that if some events had fallen out differently—if Lenin had not reached Russia, and if, once there, he had not, down to the very last, fought a central executive committee which was more ready to rely upon the automatic operation of the great social historic forces than to prepare the insurrection—the October revolution might very well not have occurred when it did. It might even not have occurred at all.

To be sure the historical events leading up to October are shown to have been inevitable after they have occurred. But unless the law of causality is to be called into question, this can be established for every historical event once it is over and done with. A critical use of the materialistic conception of history shows that it is easier to establish the fact that some things could not have occurred than to prove that what did occur was the only thing that could possibly have occurred. Objective social forces determine what may be and what cannot be; but only the living affirmations of class activity can determine what must be.

Trotsky more than once admits this about the Russian revolution. Discussing the differences which broke out among the members of the Central Executive Committee of the Bolshevik party on the eve of the revolution, he writes:

> A revolutionary situation cannot be preserved at will. If the Bolsheviks had not seized the power in October and November, in all probability they would not have seized it at all. Instead of firm leadership the masses would have found among the Bolsheviks that same disparity between word and deed which they were already sick of, and they would have ebbed away in the course of two or three months from this party which had deceived their hopes, just as they had recently ebbed away from the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. A part of the workers would have fallen into indifferentism, another part would have burned up their force in convulsive movements, in anarchistic flare-ups, in guerilla skirmishes, in a Terror dictated by revenge and despair. The breathing spell thus offered would have been used by the bourgeoisie to conclude a separate peace with the Hohenzollerns, and stamp out the revolutionary organizations. Russia would again have been included in the circle of capitalist states as a semi-imperialist, semi-colonial country.

Upon what factors did the resolution to seize power depend during the crucial moments when the question hung in the balance, and when Lenin himself was moved to proclaim: "The success of the Russian and world revolution depends upon two or three days' struggle?" Trotsky's detailed analysis leaves no doubt that in the concrete revolutionary situation of 1917 it was the character of the Bolshevik party as a whole which, despite the waverings of some of its leaders, mustered sufficient intelligence, flexibility, and will to action to insure a practically bloodless triumph. Trotsky is the first Marxist historian to do justice to the gigantic role of the political party in the historical process. The true hero of the Russian revolution is not Lenin—as some idolators, and in some pages of the first volume, even Trotsky, himself suggests—but the Bolshevik party, of which Lenin was an integral part, and which prepared itself for action by the interstitial processes of self-criticism. The lessons which Trotsky's history conveys are reinforced by the negative experiences of the Italian proletariat in 1921 and the German proletariat in 1923, and again in 1933, when due to the absence of an *aktionsfähig* revolutionary party, the waves of reaction closed over its head. The contemporary implications of Trotsky's emphasis are no less impressive than their historical bearings. A revolutionary political party which fails to meet certain minimum conditions of intelligence, courage, and democratic self-criticism, cannot hope to come to power by its own efforts; and if sudden social upsurge vaults it into power, it cannot hope to remain there and still be faithful to its principles.

Trotsky's abstract formulation of his philosophy does not reflect the multiplicity and variety which his actual descriptions contain. He speaks too often, and sometimes with mystic fervor, "of that mighty obedience to natural law which characterizes the development of great revolutions." Yet the seam of historical necessity in his analysis is woven with many more short-and-broken threads than his formal statements take note of. This disparity is a tribute to Trotsky's honesty. For he is too sensitive to the influence of factors which derive from outside the monistically determined economic system to force his conclusions into the doctrinaire mold of "orthodox" Marxism. That is why the situations he describes seem to grow organically under his hands. But Trotsky does make an heroic effort to reconcile his rigid and abstract determinism with the welter of contingent detail. He suggests that historical patterns work themselves out not only through human effort but sometimes despite it. The waverings of individuals, their uncertainties, error, and despair, merely accent the grandeur of the whole. This is strangely reminiscent of Hegel's *die List der Vernunft* (The Cunning of Reason) which uses the passion and fear of men to achieve its predetermined rational plan:

> If we were to unfold on a screen the most brilliant of Napoleon's victories, the film would show us, side by side with genius, scope, ingenuity, heroism, also the irresolution of individual marshals, the confusion of generals unable to read the map, the stupidity of officers, and the panic of whole detachments, even down to the bowels relaxed with fright. This realistic document would only testify that the army of Napoleon consisted not of the automatons of legend, but of living Frenchmen born and brought up during the break between two epochs. And the picture of human weaknesses would only the more plainly emphasize the grandeur of the whole. Can it be denied, however, that human weakness might reach a point where it will lose the victory, and spoil the picture? And that this point is not always historically determined but often results from a conjunction of relatively independent series of events?

Trotsky's history achieves its most significant unity in its representation of action. It dramatizes the conflict of classes not only in the open struggle in the streets but in the fevered calm of party conference and legislative debate, in the secret code of the diplomats, and the private diaries of public figures. The very verbiage and rhetoric of statesmen become telling illustrations of the irreconcilable purposes and the iron-clad "either-or" logic generated within the revolutionary situation. The chapter on "The State Conference in Moscow" in the second volume is reconstructed from the minutes of the session and descriptions from participants. Yet the proceedings come alive under Trotsky's febrile pen and we can see, as in a negative, the recapitulation of February and the rehearsal for October. The Bolsheviks—in temporary defeat—did not attend this rhetorical banquet at which Kerensky, Kornilov, and the Socialist Conciliators sought to compose their differences; but their ghost haunts every session, and its cry, "Political power cannot be divided; make way for the Soviets," can be heard above the shrill historical eloquence of Kerensky, the staccato threats of Kornilov, and the unconvincing volubility of the compromisers whose "orthodox" Marxist theory had not prepared them to expect a social revolution in Russia. From this point on in the historical narrative, the dramatic tension of the recital, which in the first few crowded chapters of the second volume had suffered a lapse, returns to the level of the first volume, and moves forward from one brilliant chapter to another until the final accounts of the insurrection and the congress of the soviet dictatorship in the third volume bring the analysis to a close.

It is to be hoped that this "close" is only a tentative one, for Trotsky would be the first to admit that the Russian revolution did not end with the events of October 25th.

The task of the historian is to understand history not to reconstruct it. But as in all other things, the experience of an event, if not a sufficient, is at least a necessary, condition for proper comprehension. Not all who undergo the experience of love understand what it means to be in love. The experiences of the past are forever irrecoverable. And yet in words the past can be imaginatively reconstructed. Fortunately, the check upon the imaginative reconstruction in Trotsky's history can be derived from the actual experiences of the historical participants and spectators. And since Trotsky could not have been everywhere at once, it is important to know how veridical his imaginative projections are. In this connection I know of no greater tribute that has been paid to an historian than the declaration of Arthur Ransome who was on the scene at the outbreak of the Revolution—a scene which Trotsky reconstructed from available data fourteen years later: "I could not believe," Ransome wrote after reading the first volume, "that Trotsky was not there."

Readers of the English translation owe Max Eastman an unutterable debt of gratitude for what is probably the most remarkable rendition ever made from a Russian prose text by an English translator.

MENDING THE NET. By Thomas Eakins.

Towards a New Realism

(*Continued from preceding page*)

next popular successes in fiction will deal with the return of the younger generation to the loyalties, the endurances, and the self-denials of their elders. But this would be only a confession of defeat for restless egoism. There will be no new powerful school of fiction (or drama, or poetry for that matter) until we have coldly and clearly reconsidered, like the eighteenth century, the question of what men live for, and how, and why. To Fielding or Smollett or Dr. Johnson or Jane Austen, our fiction would seem curiously purposeless. Not purposeless because it conveys no moral, but purposeless in the deeper sense of a study of life that has no frame and hence no standards or principles. What to expect of humanity was a consideration which the Greeks made a chief concern of both their philosophy and their humanism, and Seneca's echoing of Socrates's amazement that civilized man should be willing to waste his time on undirected enterprises while tenaciously conserving his goods, is still an impressive document. What to expect of humanity, what men live for, has not been a subject which interested either dramatists or fictionists in our time. The best writers have proceeded on an instinctive basis which has often served them well; the second best have either dodged the problem, or choked us with theories, which is a very different thing from the shrewd insight of a Voltaire, or even the illuminating prejudice of a Stendahl. It is not theories, ideologies, doctrines, but a fresh view of the realities in human cause and effect which will be the raison d'être of a new fiction. Muddled techniques, indecisive experiments, propaganda, warped characterization, and a failure in humor and humanity alike, in so much fiction in our day, may all be due to the lack of that poised idea of man as a creature of prejudice, infinitely human, infinitely self-deluded, which Molière had and Fielding and Jane Austen.

A Massive Figure

THOMAS EAKINS, HIS LIFE AND WORK. By LLOYD GOODRICH. Published for the Whitney Museum of American Art by the Studio Publications. 1933. $10.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER

WITH a gravity and thoroughness befitting his theme, Mr. Lloyd Goodrich writes the scanty annals of Eakins's life, adding a succinct but weighty appreciation of the work. The author has had access to Eakins's papers, and presents much new and inteersting material concerning his student days at Paris. The quite objective and factual treatment is in refreshing contrast to the fluffy *soi-disant* psychological biography of the day. From the mere facts and scattered sayings emerges the massive figure of the great artist. One feels that Eakins, who loathed easy publicity, would approve this book. There are seventy good illustrations, a complete list of works, an index, and a bibliography. A prolonged labor of research has been performed without evasion or lassitude, with the result of one of the most distinguished artist biographies of our generation.

There are naturally minor inaccuracies and here and there a slip in judgment, but they do not affect the value of the book. The New York critics cannot fairly be charged with neglect of Eakins and tardiness in recognizing his great quality. He rarely exhibited at New York, and even at Philadelphia only fitfully. No real survey of his work was natural or easy before the Memorial Exhibition after his death. Nor is it quite accurate to say that the tardy acclaim came chiefly from critics favorable to the newest movements. The conservative critics, the minority of the Right, unanimously did their little bit.

This admirable monograph is not likely to be superseded. For this reason it is a pity that the printer, William Edwin Rudge, who otherwise has made an exceptionally good book, should not have found a way to reduce its really appalling weight.

Hanging on the wall of Got Begot House, Winchester, England, is the following poem:

As we meet and touch each day
The many travelers on our way
Let every such brief contact be,
A glorious helpful ministry.

The contact of the soil and seed
Each giving to the other's need,
Each helping on the other's best
And blessing each, as others blest.

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Bully Boy

MIKE FINK: King of Mississippi Keelboatmen. By WALTER BLAIR and FRANKLIN J. MEINE. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1933. $3.

Reviewed by BERNARD DE VOTO

THE greatest of the bully boys has at last been lifted out of the fading newsprint where the few who know of him in these soberer days have hitherto had to seek him out, and has been given the recognition due him and as much as may be of biography. The enterprise of Mr. Blair and Mr. Meine works realistically in the social history of the American frontier and adds a considerable force to a current of dissent that had begun to run against a number of sanctified literary ideas. It is an amusing turn that utilizes the hardest drinking and hardest fighting riverman, himself grown something of a myth, for the destruction of mythology, and yet that is the burden of this salty and enormously entertaining book. Another area about which the evangelical critics have exercised their intuitive knowledge thus comes under the scrutiny of fact, with the usual embarrassment to intuition. Their preference for investigation over guesswork and for fact-finding over lofty thinking will probably earn the epithet "pedant" for the authors: a pedant would seem to be a man who knows what he is talking about, whereas one who disdains knowledge as an accessory to assurance is, instead, a prophet.

The America to which Mike Fink belonged, the frontier of the forests, the rivers, and the fur trade, was one which prophecy has chosen to denounce as Puritanical and repressed. Yet it is hard to detect the influence of Puritanism on Mike's career or on the race which laughed at and enjoyed that career and confided it to the folklore that is the surest evidence of authenticity. Brawler, drinker, wencher, the champion hard man of a hard race, king of the keelboatmen, half-horse, half-alligator, and all pizen, Mike is unquestionably an offence to the sensitive and a humiliation to those who would be happier if there had been art galleries or philosophers at Natchez-under-the-Hill. But, for all that, it is hard to see how either Calvinism or the romantic movement in action, gave birth to him. It is just as hard to find in him the bourgeois ideology which his frontier means to another kind of prophecy now taking shape below Fourteenth Street.

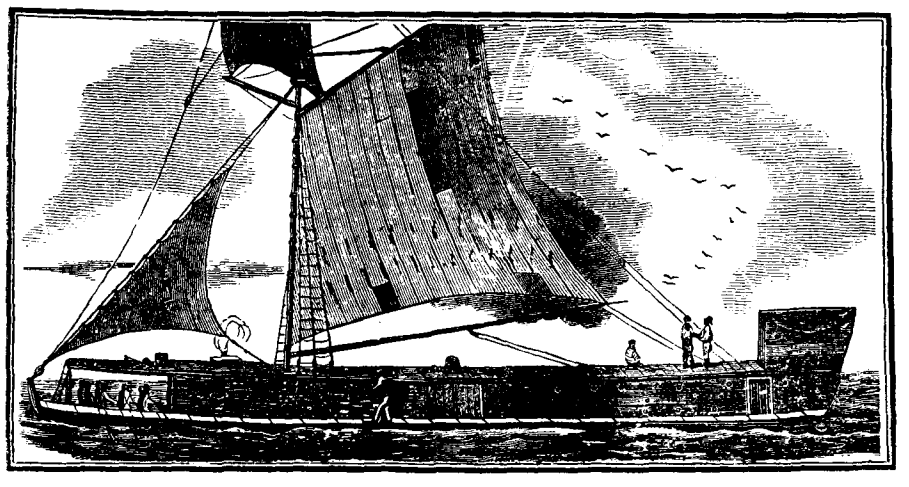
The effort of Messrs. Blair and Meine has been to find out as much as possible about Mike, to gather together all the stories and legends in which he figures, and then to display him against the gorgeous background of his time. That their labor has been enormous is obvious to anyone who has worked in their field; it ought to be apparent even to expositors who are contemptuous of fact. First of all, then, here are the facts about Mike Fink—never before gathered together in one place, a good many of them never before ascertained. It is now possible to follow Mike from his birth at Pittsburg through the great days of his scouting, hunting, and keelboating, to his melancholy end on the upper Missouri—and to follow him with an extraordinary degree of confidence, considering the material from which his biography must be written. Where facts are not recoverable, the authors have supported the narrative with material drawn from the cognate literature of the time. The facts form the indispensable framework, but the labor which unearthed them has made also a rich harvest of the anecdotes, legends, and more ambitious fiction that has clustered about Mike, and these are the important things. It is an absorbing, an uproarious chronicle, packed full of Indian warfare, feats of marksmanship, trailmaking, trail-reading, rioting, drinking, wenching, skill, courage, daredevilry, sudden attack, midnight skulking, murder, pillage, eye-gouging, tall talk, loud singing, and louder laughter. An odd folk, these Puritan-Pioneers! They are here presented in a curiously exuberant mood for the repressed. It was in this way that the nation's freight moved down its rivers, that its boundaries pressed westward in something that may have been manifest destiny but was not, by a Mormon block, any kind of solemnity. It was, observe, frontiersmen who created the Mike Fink stories, and, among a good many others, frontiersmen who laughed at them.

The Fink stories belong to the category of legend—or fable, if you like, or folklore. And yet, as Messrs. Blair and Meine several times observe, they are the vehicle of realism. Wearing the form of this humor, realism first enters American fiction; it is with the frontier humor that the realistic depiction of American character first becomes a literary force. The authors quietly point out the nature of the literature against which this humor made its way in the periodicals and annuals. There had been before it no opposition to the swooning Angelinas, the bearded barons with pasts in piracy or bastardy, of our romance. The observation is commended to prophets. It is only one of innumerable meaty asides that accompany the narrative.

JACKET DESIGN FOR "MIKE FINK."

Do I make clear that this is an important book? It is first of all exciting reading, a rapid narrative supported by the gorgeous phase of our past with which it deals, but it is more than that. It is a source book for both history and literary criticism, fields which for the first time in America are beginning to find much in common. It will hereafter be indispensable to students of American literature. But it has a further indispensability: in recovering this rich material, the authors have added to the outline of the American experience. That outline takes shape with increasing clearness, and increasing damage to prophecy. This book belongs among a small but growing list of unemotional, utterly true depictions of the frontier. It helps to make clear what kind of people the Americans were.

The *American Spectator*, in its "Required Reading" has invented a serviceable implement. "Mike Fink" must hereafter be Required Reading for everyone who undertakes to study the national soul or interpret its manifestations. The peculiar merit of such books is that they give meaning to that otherwise futile effort of prophecy.



A KEELBOAT ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

Poet and Man

LAST POEMS. By D. H. LAWRENCE. With an Introduction by Richard Aldington. New York: The Viking Press. 1933. $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THIS volume will be invaluable to all those who have speculated upon what a tortured poet was and what he might have been. It is important as spiritual biography; fascinating in its revelation of a temperament seeking, and only sometimes finding, its technique; rich in its exhibit of connotations and contrasts. From two books of manuscripts left by D. H. Lawrence and found after his death, Richard Aldington has collected two hundred and seventy-three posthumous poems, only two or three of which have previously appeared. They are not all "poems" by any means, except by courtesy title. They are sketches of poems, footnotes to poems; they are quick aphorisms and curt epigrams, many of which fall into the group of pensées Lawrence liked to call "Pansies"; some are an unprinted part of the snarling, trivial set once printed as "Nettles," while others are as different from these as ecstatic poetry is different from exacerbated prose. And scattered through the volume are the amazing moments of revelation: the profound recordings of this poet's unending battle between his intuitive knowledge and his nerves. Thus the book is Lawrence's emotional Last Will and Testament as well as his "last poems."

The casual reader will be arrested first of all by the least poetic part of the collection: by the one- and two-line statements and restatements through which Lawrence tried to summarize his attitude to the growing complexity of civilization which he believed was destroying the integrity as well as the intensity of life. Here are Lawrence's responses and irritations, his reactions to the ancient gods and the modern goodless God; to the love which is possession and to love which is too spineless to possess anything; to the affectations of art and the abomination of the artist; to the Englishman's false worship of "niceness" and the Spaniard's false luxuriance in sin; to sea-bathers and the sound of bells and J. C. Squire and the failure of the machine and the British Broadcasting system and the terra incognita of consciousness and the choice of evils between bourgeois and bolshevist and the gladness of death.

Much has been made recently of Lawrence's influences. Aldington is, I believe, the first to chart a relation between Lawrence and Joyce. Without forcing a too arbitrary kinship or a too ingenious contrast, Aldington points out that Joyce's writing is founded on "the conception of Being" while Lawrence's revolves about "the conception of Becoming"; Joyce's work is "static and solid, logically planned, smelling of the lamp, a sort of unchristmas present to the Lord in Whose sight a thousand years are as a day," whereas Lawrence's work is "fluid, personal, imperfect, a series of inconclusive adventures only related because they all happened to the same man."

Aldington might have made a still more telling comparison had he gone on to contrast Lawrence with Whitman, correcting those critics who have been eager to see the Whitman "influence" in the surface similarities of self-assertion and sexual concern. The unmetrical, loosely rhythmical form employed by both poets likewise misleads those anxious to build a bridge between the two. Actually the two poets are almost opposed in extremes, in philosophy as well as form. Lawrence's rhythms are brusque and taut, shaped to the sentence rather than tuned to lengthy stanzas, whereas Whitman's are large and perfervid, flowing into great tidal movements. Lawrence's diction is direct, talk-patterned, unostentatious; Whitman's is florid, equivocal, crammed with gaudy and inappropriate neologisms. But the greatest difference is in their feeling toward humanity. Whitman's cosmic embrace took in everything and everybody; Lawrence was nauseated by such indiscriminate, all-inclusive love. Whitman glorified "the divine average"; Lawrence distrusted the average and scorned his divinity—"en masse, the great word of civilization!" Whitman foresaw a democratic brotherhood, a world of constant companionship; the very thought of it revolted Lawrence whose one hope was in the separate soul, realized through the salvation of loneliness. Sometimes this disgust is implicit, sometimes it is openly expressed; on one occasion it is condensed into two lines which Lawrence pointedly entitles "Retort to Whitman."

> And whoever walks a mile full of false sympathy walks to the funeral of the whole human race.

Love, human-huddled love, is the whip with which Lawrence flagellated himself even to his death. To him nothing was more divine than the consummation of natural physical and super-sensual desire—it was holy for it made men whole. But nothing was more execrable than "mental love," the obligation to love, "the disease of the mischievous mind"; it made him hysterical with anger wherever he found it, whether in Whitman or in Jesus.

> When Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor
> he forced us to live a great lie, or to disobey:
> for we can't love anybody, neighbor or no neighbor, to order—
> and faked love has rotted our marrow.

But this volume is important not only for Lawrence's differences with the poets to whom he has been compared, but for the qualities which made him what he became. The purely pictorial pages are as fine as those in "Birds, Beasts and Flowers"; the paradoxes of tenderness and cruelty, the conflicts between deep pain and deeper pleasure, are wholly Lawrentian. The pages do not lack for variety. A complete story of self-absorption is packed into sixteen ironic lines which Lawrence bitterly called "True Love at Last." Although obscured by many jingles, by too much protesting and nettle-like exasperations, there is that recognizably dark poetry—"the hot blood's blindfold art"—which no admirer of Lawrence can forget. At its best, it is as memorable as anything he ever wrote; lifting itself above the howling *Sturm und Drang*, it has a purity which might be explained by Lawrence's evolving personality or his premonition of death.

> The lark nests in his heart
> and the white swan swims in the marshes of his loins,
> and through the wide prairies of his breast a young bull herds the cows,
> lambs frisk among the daisies of his brain.

Here is Lawrence's mystical affirmation in the midst of wild and mechanical cries of despair. And here, with greater force, the conviction is compressed into three Blakeian lines:

> There is nothing to save, now all is lost,
> but a tiny core of stillness in the heart
> like the eye of a violet.

There remain the final poems, the poems about death. These are, figuratively, one poem, a poem of rebellion put by, a poem in which the necessity of struggle and the knowledge of its futility, the desire to stay and the wish to go are reconciled. The poem begins more nobly than any poem Lawrence ever composed:

> I sing of autumn and the falling fruit
> and the long journey towards oblivion.
>
> The apples falling like great drops of dew
> to bruise themselves an exit from themselves. . . .

Here, at the end, we watch the birth of a new creation. Lawrence, the ever-changing, changes once more; the vitality is undiminished, the dignity is increased. The private God with whom Lawrence was in communion was breaking him down to his own oblivion, sending him

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Poet and Man

(*Continued from preceding page*)

forth "on a new morning, a new man." The eloquent "Shadows" declares it fully. It begins:

And if tonight my soul may find her peace
in sleep, and sink in good oblivion,
and in the morning wake like a new-opened flower
then I have been dipped again in God, and new-created. . . .

And if, as autumn deepens and darkens,
I feel the pain of falling leaves and stems that break in storms
and trouble and dissolution and distress
and then the softness of deep shadows folding, folding
around my soul and spirit, around my lips
so sweet, like a swoon, or like the drowse of a low sad song
singing darker than the nightingale, on, on, to the solstice
and the silence of short days, the silence of the year, the shadow,
then I shall know that my life is moving still
with the dark earth, and drenched
with the deep oblivion of earth's lapse and renewal.

There is nothing to add to the low ringing of such notes. They furnish their own grave commentary; they ask no other response but their own echoes.

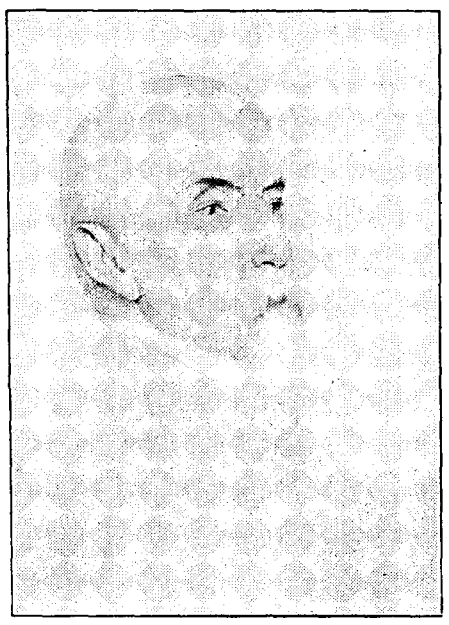
Henry Adams Once More

(*Continued from first page*)

"inheritance" to run after a mess of pottage, he felt it necessary to tell the world, somewhat shamefacedly, why he never got the pottage. This I take it is essentially Mr. Adams's own view of the matter, although of course he never falls to the level of such brutality of statement. It is at least his view that Henry Adams desired to "control power in some form which could be the only touchstone of success for an Adams." Power in almost any form that would impress the world; but preferably that sort of power that an Adams, who could, as a boy in church, "sit behind a President grandfather, and . . . read over his head the tablet in memory of a President great-grandfather," ought of right to possess. In short, political power. In England, watching his father function effectively as a diplomat, "one began to dream the sensation of wielding unmeasured power. The sense came, and passed, leaving the brain a little dazed, doubtful, shy." But the brain a little dazed, doubtful, shy, was not at all the brain to exercise that sort of power. The true "inheritance" of Henry Adams was a brain suited to exercise power in another realm altogether—the realm of the scholar, the teacher, the writer, the thinker. His writings are sufficient proof of the fact, but Adams himself seems never to have been reconciled to it. He seems always resisting his genius, but never successfully, so that one has the impression that he wrote all his admirable works in spite of himself. He might have said, and did in effect say, that he had demonstrated in thirty volumes the futility of writing books. Was he unaware that his genius was at war with his ambition? Or, aware of it, was he merely unwilling to submit wholeheartedly to his genius?

He seems at least to have realized his unfitness for politics or diplomacy. But he tried journalism as the next best chance for an Adams, and it was only as a side issue to his editorship of the *North American* that he accepted an assistant professorship of history at Harvard. Afterwards, browbeating the facts a little, he said that his family browbeat him into this job, and that it turned out as he expected—no good. Seven years of brilliant teaching proved, to every one except himself, that it was the very career for which he was fitted. Yet he resigned his position, but only, in the years following, to demonstrate once more (was it in spite of himself? His family didn't browbeat him into this) that he had in his hand the sort of power suited to his genius by writing, in nine volumes, a history which for clarity, tight construction, and sheer intelligence applied to the exposition of a great theme, had not then, and has not since, been equalled by any American historian. Nevertheless, having achieved this masterpiece, he turned his back on it in order to watch, from 1603 H Street the political Zoo in Washington, in the intervals of running about the world searching for an explanation of the universe that would explain why he never found an explanation of his inability to achieve "success."

Why did Henry Adams abandon a career in which he accomplished more in ten years than most men of that profession do in a life-time? He says he liked the students, and liked teaching them. But he did not like faculty meetings (was it necessary to attend them?), and "socially he preferred Congressmen to professors" . . . in spite of the presence of "some of the liveliest and most agreeable of men—James Russell Lowell, Francis J. Child, . . . William James, and a dozen others, who would have made the joy of London and Paris" had not society spoiled them by dubbing them professor." So, there it is. No doubt it was difficult for an Adams to think of himself as no more than a professor grandson of a President grand-



HENRY ADAMS IN LATER LIFE.

father, but it is surely superfluous to suppose that those good chaps, Francis J. Child and William James, were "spoiled by society." Someone said that the only void in which Shelley "beat his luminous wings in vain" was a void in the mind of Matthew Arnold. I suggest that the only quality that could possibly have spoiled William James for Henry Adams was a certain lack of quality (I don't like to call it snobbishness) in the mind of Henry Adams.

Equally illuminating are Adams's reason for urging Lodge to go in for the writing of history. It seems that a successful history would set Lodge up in Boston "as a species of literary lion" and that with that position would come "social dignity, European reputation, *and a foreign mission to close*." If, in writing his "History of the United States," Adams was taking his own incredible, naively cynical advice, one can easily understand why he abandoned history writing. His history was not "successful." It neither made him a literary lion, nor gave him a European reputation, or any reputation at all—except, of course, among those "dubbed professor." After such an anticlimax what could the poor author do? Forget it, refuse to discuss it (it is referred to but not named in the "Education"), say that the whole of it, including maps and index, meant less to him than any single chapter in "Esther." Was that the way a merely disillusioned historian would treat a history acclaimed by the world of scholars? Or was it only the proper way to treat a history that was likely, from the vantage point of 1603 H Street, to be regarded as "unsuccessful"? We know that at 1603 H Street Adams associated with men—Hay, Lodge, Cameron—who exercised "power" never dreamed of by John Fiske and James Russell Lowell. Must we suppose that such men as Lodge and Cameron, not having been spoiled by society, were better able than Francis J. Child and William James to make of existence something more refreshing than a "social desert" for Henry Adams? It's a strange thought.

Space is lacking to develop this hypothesis further. The hypothesis must stand or fall, I think, according to the answer one gives to the following question: Was Adams's search for "a historical formula that should satisfy the conditions of the stellar universe" the result of genuine intellectual curiosity, or only another, last, forlorn bid for the favor of the bitch goddess success? At this point the real difficulties crop up; for while there are relevant points to be made on both sides, Adams has, in his later works, so concealed himself behind a barrage of paradox and whimsical humor that neither supposition is convincing. On first thought one is inclined to say that Adams's repeated assertion that his life was a failure must be disingenuous unless we are to suppose that for him nothing could count as "success" that did not, in some sense, make him the observed of all observers. But that is too simple. No simple black or white, or black and white, will represent Henry Adams correctly. An American who saw something of Adams in Paris in 1910-1911 tells me that "his habitual attitude" was that of a man who somehow feels that he has "missed out," but does not really *believe* that he *has* missed out, and at the same time cannot quite understand why he should have missed out or should feel that he has. This strikes me as a penetrating observation, and one which the "Education" confirms. Isn't this precisely the attitude one might expect of a man whose genius for reflection was always at war with his desire for "power," and who never knew it? Perhaps then the secret of Henry Adams was simply that he didn't know what was the matter with him. But then again perhaps he did know, but was too proud or perverse to admit it, even to himself.

A Friend in Need

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE. Compiled and edited by SIR PAUL HARVEY. New York: Oxford University Press. 1933.

HERE is a volume which, despite its shortcomings, should prove a very present help in trouble. For here is collected a vast amount of information which should, but all too rarely does, form the equipment of the cultured reader, conveniently arranged, and catholic enough in scope to meet a wide variety of needs. Here, for instance, are biographies of great and near-great literary figures of past and present, brief lives of less important writers of today to whom the contemporaneity of their reputation lends significance, digests of novels, allusions, references, names of characters and places, familiar and less familiar, personalities in the historical, political, and business worlds whose shadow is cast over literature, historical events of frequent mention in fiction or of sufficient magnitude to have colored thought and writing—in short, the odds and ends of information which illuminate and elucidate letters.

In the main the book is excellent. So long as it devotes its space to literature from the British angle it is ample in its inclusions, discriminating in its selections, and balanced in its disposition of emphasis. It is only when it comes to the American entries—and even more to the American omissions — that serious objection to it may be taken. Surely a literary handbook should contain reference among American poets to Fitz-Greene Halleck (more especially since it includes Francis Rodman Drake), and to Edna St. Vincent Millay, William Rose Benét, and Robinson Jeffers among moderns, and should embrace among critics Paul Elmer More, Stuart Sherman, Silas Brownell, and George E. Woodberry. Surely, too, it would have been more fitting to give place to such a person as Ada Isaacs Menken, who wrote poetry of a sort, created a furor on two continents, and was a friend of Swinburne and Victor Hugo, than to her husband, John Heenan, the Benicia Boy, whose famous fight with the English pugilistic champion, Sayres, has almost passed from the memory of present-day Americans.

It might have been expected that John Hay, whose poetry was well known in its day, and whose "Breadwinners" was the forerunner of the contemporary American novel concerned with economic conditions, would have been included. On the other hand it is surprising to find more lineage devoted to Andrew Carnegie than to Lincoln. Again, Walt Whitman receives the same amount of space as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Robert Bridges twice as much as either. William Dean Howells, on the other hand, gets only slightly less than Jane Austen, though it is perhaps but fair to state that the novels of the latter are given fairly lengthy treatment under their own titles. Among American periodicals the *Saturday Review of Literature* appears, but the *New Republic* and the *Nation* (in which during the last century some of the most distinguished criticism written in America appeared), are not listed. Eugene O'Neill, generally acknowledged to be the leading contemporary American dramatist, is omitted. So, too, are George Kaufman and Marc Connelly.

An error of another sort appears in the synopsis of Howell's "The Lady of the Aroostook," which is described as the story of "a young New England school teacher, who finds herself set down in the midst of fashionable and sophisticated Venice," whereas it is actually a tale of typically New England bearing. E. W. Howe's "The Story of a Country Town," is quoted as being "the grimmest of American novels," a statement which must certainly have been made before the present school of American realists came into being.

But why multiply instances? It is mistakes and omissions such as these which materially lessen the value of what would otherwise be an indispensable handbook. We understand that the new edition of the work, when it appears, will contain revisions in the American section. It is sincerely to be hoped so, for "The Oxford Companion to English Literature" is far too excellent in the main to be crippled by inaccuracies which are easily preventable.

"The historians of Verona," says a Rome correspondent in the London *Observer*, "have decided that all the romance about Romeo and Juliet is mere tradition. The Capulets, it appears, never lived in that city: Juliet never existed. Local tradition was responsible for the story of their unfortunate attachment, but William Shakespeare wove it into an immortal play, for which everybody will be grateful.

"The tablet on the wall of the so-called house of Juliet is to be replaced by another, which will explain that local tradition, and not the historians, sanctioned the legend and inspired the greatest of poets. The historians of Verona explain that nobody named Capulet ever owned property in the city and that the name belonged to a political faction, not to a family."

Last year the New York Public Library acquired some examples of early Russian printing, including no less an item than the first dated Russian book, printed in Moscow in 1564. These exceedingly rare books have been placed on exhibit in the cases back of the Inquiry Desk in the Fifth Avenue entrance hall. They will remain on view one month.

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The New Michael Arlen

MAN'S MORTALITY. By MICHAEL ARLEN. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY TRACY

EARLY in 1924, with the publication of "These Charming People," Mr. Michael Arlen became fashionable. Later in the same year, with the appearance of "The Green Hat," he became popular. The first was bad enough, but when the second mishap overtook him serious-minded readers gave him up. Another promising young writer had been lost. It would take more than cleverness to struggle out from under this double nemesis. So they reasoned and, within the limits of human probability, they were justified in their reasoning. But this young author who, as an English critic put it, "has no equal in the *dandysme* of the soul," has done the improbable. With the publication of "Man's Mortality" he has become important and both he and his book have to be taken seriously.

I am taking the man first. I find the dedication significant. This book is inscribed to the memory of Sarkis Kouyoumjian, Merchant, of Manchester, by his youngest son. A work of cleverness and of superficial intent would not have been so inscribed. And I sense a respect for the genius of a race that is Armenian. That genius has not hitherto found expression (or none that is adequate) in a literature of the West, as we know it. The spirit of that race is not frivolous; condescends to flippancy only for a purpose. A young writer, Armenian by birth, could saturate himself in the atmosphere of Mayfair, of Paris, of Monte Carlo, of Biskra, so completely that the false light of a glamorous sophistication suffused all his pages. He could do that for a considerable time . . . if it paid him. But he had not begun to write. He was, as he himself told an interviewer, "playing scales in public." And he had the grit to destroy what, at the age of twenty-three, he had hoped would be his big novel, "The Dark Angel." Ten years have passed since then. He has begun to write. The first chapter of the new book is consonant with the genius of the Armenian race. It dramatizes the integrity of an individual human being, as human, in conflict with the collective impersonality of a commercial organization for world management. Later on in the story, nationalism is brought in on the side of individualism; described as a power that is primitive, but to be reckoned with. Both individualism and nationalism are deeply, hotly imbedded in the Armenian psychic constitution. But what is even more to my point, its fabric, like the fabric of "Man's Mortality," is moral. It is moral with the organic morality of an old and rugged oak, well anchored, contemptuous of flurries.

Arlen living in Mayfair and writing fashionable stories about loose or frail or clever or decayed sophisticates was an anomaly, or else a deliberate impersonation; a clever one. Also he was idling . . . in a world of idlers. But even then it was said of him (in *The New Statesman*) that he wrote "with the truculence of a Mohawk and the suavity of a Beau Nash." The new Michael Arlen has by no means abandoned any of the skill he acquired in pleasing his earlier public. He has diminished the tricks. Nothing, now, diverts attention from the point he wishes to make. There is a drive here, and depth. The man is writing.

He is not writing a novel. "Man's Mortality," at least, is not one. The publishers wisely describe it as "a story by Michael Arlen." It is a good one; requires no stimulants to carry one through it at a sitting. Briefly summarized, the book is a story of the future of internationalism conceived as a mechanical control of world affairs in the interests of an unscrupulous combine (International Aircraft and Airways) enforcing the *pax aeronautica* for its own advantage. Date, 1987. I. A. & A. overreaches itself and is broken in the final catastrophe that ends a cycle and paves the way for the first faint beginnings of a first World State. There is novelty in the adumbration of that State as "something between a workhouse, a sanitarium, and an asylum." There is not the slightest romanticism in Arlen's conception either of historic reality or a future Utopia. No time is wasted on imbecilities of prognostication irrelevant to the story, which is well plotted and stripped for action. There are, it is true, breath-taking inventions, but they are strictly necessary to the narrative. And a touch of mysticism—that is necessary too, because it floats an underlying philosophy without which "Man's Mortality" would be only what Mr. Wells says it is, "a big, worthwhile gesture of the imagination."

It is that, and a little more; which explains why one cares to go back—after yielding to a tale as well packed with drama and suspense as any tale needs to be—to go back and ponder a little. And some things remain with one. The engaging inconclusiveness of Mr. Craddock, the "President of Great Britain," runs all through the narrative and furnishes its only clue to an ultimate solution of the social problem. Mr. Craddock is very human. His presence in the book gives it a saving sanity that was wanting in the tone of Aldous Huxley's caustically imagined Utopia, "Brave New World." But the two are alike in one thing. Both envisage, as a last resort for intelligent folk, some sort of an asylum. Huxley names Iceland. Arlen does not specify, but hints that his island of sanity will be a nucleus for some far distant world order.

MICHAEL ARLEN.

The Saturday Review Recommends

This Group of Current Books:

MAN'S MORTALITY. By MICHAEL ARLEN. *Doubleday, Doran.*
The author of "The Green Hat" in utterly different mood.

MIKE FINK. By WALTER BLAIR and F. C. MEINE. *Holt.*
Tales of the legendary king of the Mississippi keelboatmen.

BERMUDA, PAST AND PRESENT. By WALTER B. HAYWARD. *Dodd, Mead.*
A new edition of a standard work.

This Less Recent Book:

"JENNIFER LORN." By ELINOR WYLIE. *Knopf.*
A brilliant tour-de-force by the gifted writer who in it first proved herself a novelist as well as poet.

An Amorphous World

YE DRUNKEN DAMOZEL. By SIMON JESTY. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1933. $2.

THE drunken damozel skips a very light fantastic through a complexity of audacious and gallant phantasmagoria. Her tale is told in epigrams to the accompaniment of periodic Pan-piping. Her world is amorphous; they that dwell therein possess a wisdom never to be found on highways or in churches; the damozel, herself, does not even inhabit a single personality, but flits from slum-sprite to *artiste* and back again without serious loss to her equilibrium.

Mr. Jesty's style is piquant and poetic, and though reminiscent of the major moderns, is as elusive as his characters. He makes frequent but distinctive use of the traditional literary devices, and, for reasons best known to himself, never leaves the present tense. The erudition of the author is unobjectionable; Debussy, Greek mythology, the Bible, and the second scherzo of Chopin contribute to an atmosphere of intellectual voluptuousness.

Each character, if analyzed, is really Mr. Jesty in a different mood. There is scarcely any attempt to differentiate the speech of the various personages. From the damozel to the Negro waiter, all utter Jesty's facile witticisms, and in his own vocabulary. As an example of G. B. S. outdone in the matter of portraying educated rabble, there is a steward who comments, "Phantasms of the dusk are not infrequent in the tropics, especially during the last hours at sea." Also, a waiter who volunteers, "Your voice has delusions in it, Sir."

Objectively considered, "Ye Drunken Damozel" is an "escape" novel. The story itself escapes both reality and memory. The attempted chronology is often interrupted by interludes that retard it.

With a nonchalant disregard for verisimilitude the hero, Jonah Upcott, spills his elaborate tale. It all begins in the wharf district of London where Jonah relates his meeting with Marion Tudor, the innkeeper's daughter, who of course is the acme of feminine beauty, singing naughty French songs, cleverly using her amber eyes. The feud between their families is no serious obstacle, indeed gives incident to Upcott's romancing, as well as zest. While Jonah continues studying, no matter what, for the reader can never find out, Marion skims through a succession of professions, until, probably because her father has been jailed on any of a number of charges, she suffers amnesia and turns up in Rio as none other than the illustrious Stella Vanessa, a specialist at playing Debussy. Marion in the meantime has got married to an aristocratic cripple with the soul of a Christian martyr and the manners of Petronius, finally committing suicide so that the original lovers may stage their nuptial reunion. Jonah, also meantime, has been through the war, and coincidentally happens into Rio for the final clinch after beating off his three principal rivals, not including Marion's husband, and after other complications, as for instance when Stella remembers that she is not Stella, but Marion.

The charm of the book lies not in the story but in Mr. Jesty's literary and fantastical whimsicality. "Ye Drunken Damozel" is a reverie of nymphs, fauns, hamadryads, and a nice assortment of unhumans, all enough to amuse and entertain any twentieth century industrial slave provided he is spending a summer day under an apple tree.

A Full-Length Portrait

SING BEFORE BREAKFAST. By VINCENT MCHUGH. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1933. $2.50.

Reviewed by ALVAH C. BESSIE

"LET'S GO HEMINGWAY," Genoa said. "I'll ask you questions." For the three hundred and seventeen pages of his second novel, Mr. McHugh allows his characters to go Hemingway, and if he has read his master a bit too sedulously, no reader will be able to complain that he has adulterated the original product. To the contrary, he has added an ingredient Hemingway's work does not possess, though it has been vastly and surprisingly overpraised for possessing it—a concentration of valid emotion that, in this instance, could have done very well without the hard-boiled mask he has chosen to apply to it.

Carey Halloran was the type of artist one rarely meets in life—he worked hard, was prodigiously improvident, light-hearted, and witty. A large man physically, his appetites were proportionately great, and though his wife Julie loved him with his own passion, she was geared to the practical, irremediable aspects of life—the necessity for food, clothing, and shelter. Sharing to some extent his own inexhaustible gusto for life, she could not share the potentiality he possessed for triumphing over hunger and even death, that comes from rare singleness of purpose. Their married life was a generally peaceful summer shot with brilliant electric storms. Into this already surcharged atmosphere there dropped Genoa Lamport, spoiled daughter of the rich—an archtype of the genus: over-sexed, emotionally unbalanced, as sharp of tongue and as witty as Carey Halloran. Though she may originally have wanted him, she took Pardon Gomez, a fisherman of the Island fleet, and the subsequent conflict of equally powerful and equally violent personalities Mr. McHugh has resolved with an easy talent that will serve as foundation for still better fiction.

At times his facility runs away with him, at others he writes in a manner both self-conscious and violently strained. There are sentences, paragraphs, and chapters of this book that are stilted and artificial, where the light-hearted humor breaks down and becomes almost pathetically ingenuous. There are as many sections managed with an economy of word, phrase, and emotion, that reveals clear insight, wide understanding, and ready sympathy. Stemming from the inverted sentimentalism of the hard-boiled school, this author has invariably transcended it, for he possesses more than a camera eye, more than a dictaphonic ear, more than a bag of tricks. He will drop the tricks and tap the rich well of unmistakable emotion that is amply manifest in this frequently imperfect but generally entertaining novel.

A new magazine called *Europa* will be placed on sale on April 10th and published quarterly thereafter, for the dissemination of material concerning Europe. It contains articles pertaining to art, music, politics, architecture, literature, cinema, drama, and the dance, written by European authors and artists. It is to be edited by William Kozlenko.

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The Rule of Might

COUP D'ETAT. By CURZIO MALAPARTE. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1932. $2.50.

THE TERROR IN EUROPE. By H. HESSEL TILTMAN. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1932. $3.75.

Reviewed by W. Y. ELLIOTT

"I SHOULD like to propose a toast," M. Claudel, the French Ambassador at Washington is reported to have said, after M. Laval's visit there: "Here's to the little pause between the crisis and the catastrophe." Whether his remarks were apropos of any situation more specific than the general succession of crises under which the world labors is irrelevant. In this surcharged atmosphere, preoccupied with questions not only of the survival of régimes but of whole types of civilization there is some danger that the significance of these two remarkable books may be lost. Or perhaps there is an equal danger that the brilliant cynicism of the first may obscure the relation it bears to the second. At the outset one ought to say that here are two books, each in its own way equally essential to anyone who would understand his times.

Curzio Malaparte is, though an Austrian (Suckert) by birth, a thoroughgoing Fascist by spiritual option and by experience. His role as prefect of Florence and his part in the Fascist coup d'état was a considerable one. His "Italia Barbara" was full of the odd mixture of deliberately conceived mysticism and sang froid that characterizes the mythology of Fascism. He professes in "Coup d'État" to analyze the problem of how power in the modern state may be captured and defended as a pure exercise in technique—a technique perfected as to revolution by Trotsky and as to counter-revolution by Stalin. In spite of the fact that this was "more or less the subject treated by Machiavelli," the author's preface modestly disclaims the obvious comparison. "This book is in no sense an imitation of 'The Prince'—not even a modern imitation, which would be something necessarily remote from Machiavelli." But the reason which he advances for his disclaimer is left more than doubtful after the evidence of Mr. Tiltman is all in: "In the age from which Machiavelli drew his arguments," says Signor Malaparte, "his examples and the matter for his reflections, public and private liberties, civic dignity, and the self-respect of men had fallen so low that I should fear to be insulting my readers in applying any of the teachings of the famous book to the urgent problems of modern Europe."

Mr. Tiltman, nurtured on the *Manchester Guardian* and the author of a standard life of J. Ramsay MacDonald, is certainly a modern "anti-Machiavel." Yet he shows a state of terror in the larger part of Europe that not Renaissance Italy could have surpassed. He is horrified at the cruelties, the sadisms, the political nightmare, that he exposes. But he amply proves that Signor Malaparte's master, Mussolini, does not think Machiavelli inapplicable—and *Il Duce* has taken pains so to put himself on record.

For that matter it becomes apparent that Signor Malaparte's disclaimer is either disingenuous (in the usual Fasicst manner) or ironical. He thinks that morals play in politics an even smaller role than did the Florentine who once tried to win back the favor of the Medici. The epilogue is a most unconvincing, and, for a Fascist, damning profession of admiration for the régimes founded on coups-d'état: "It is this anxiety, so natural in a lover of freedom, which gave birth to my desire to show how a modern State can be overthrown, and how it can be defended." One is grateful for the profession of intent and of faith. There is not a word in this extraordinary, superficially brilliant, and perversely fascinating book to indicate it, unless it be the condemnation of Hitler's "slavish" discipline—a condemnation heretical in the mouth of a Fascist.

Even Machiavelli had an end in view for his "Prince": a greater Italy, united and powerful. Fascism claims the same end today. But "Coup d'Etat" is a pseudo-scientific study of means which professes that ends are irrelevant. He puts into the mouth of the present Pope, Pius XI, then Monsigneur Ratti, Papal Nuncio to Warsaw, an unwitting defence of Trotsky's "modern" theory of revolutions as a sheer matter of technique: seizing the nerve centers of modern industrial capitals. And he attributes to the Pope also an argument with Sir Horace Rumbold in which the then Monsigneur Ratti "persisted that revolution was just as possible in a civilized country, strongly organized and policed, like England, as in a country overrun with anarchists, shaken by opposing political factions and invaded by a hostile army, as Poland was at that time." (It was during the darkest days of the Bolshevist invasion, when Budyonni's cavalry was knocking thunderously at the very gates of Warsaw.)

Now it may be that the Pope is correctly quoted—though the rest of the book shows Signor Malaparte to be even more a poet than a journalist or historian. But if His Holiness is correctly reported, he has far less the inwardness of the matter in his Italian subtlety than had Foch—to whom all things, war included, were first matters of morale (or myths), and second, matters of technique. England is not good ground for the most carefully planned coup d'état in the Trotsky manner, even if such a seizure of power could be organized technically. For England is nourished on a myth as yet more powerful than that of communism. Terror does not thrive there nor régimes built upon it. A mere coup d'état would be abortive.

THE PUPIL WHO OUTDID HIS MASTERS.
Pilsudski, Mussolini, and Bethlen taunting Hitler for his mildness. A cartoon, published some months ago, by *Notenkraken*, Amsterdam.

It is this failure to consider the motive power behind men and revolutions, as well as the conditions which Marx himself, after the days of the Paris commune admitted to be necessary, that makes "Coup d'Etat" a brilliant tour de force of simplification rather than a profound study of politics—a modern "Prince."

The examples—Russian, Polish, Spanish, Italian, German, with a cursory and squinting historical glance or two back to Sulla, Catiline, Caesar and Napoleon—are treated in the most Procrustean manner of the true continental ideologue: Napoleon was the first modern, among dictators, but he sinned as a technician by too great respect for "legality." Almost he failed there; all the rest of the modern crop save Trotsky and Mussolini repeat this bourgeois error. And why should Mussolini be exempted? He took power under a constitutional régime, and from the hands of the King.

The fact is that coups d'état are only possible on carefully prepared ground, where force can masquerade as the savior of "law and order"—or where force can create such a régime out of anarchy and political confusion. Disciplined shock troops to seize the sources of transport, light, heat, communication, water supply, etc., are not enough, unless supported by an *élite* large enough to improvise a state, army, and police, and by a considerable backing of opinion indoctrinated in a myth. Trotsky found that out in his struggle with Stalin. It was the capture of a party—turned anti-Semitic—at which he had failed. And that, rather than mere technical failure, brought Von Kapp low. Against a purely technical coup d'état even perfectly organized, the general strike is a completely adequate weapon.

There is small doubt that the technique of revolution and of counter defense has much to learn from the Marxians, more indeed than Signor Malaparte has learned. For he has, like an initiate of the lower orders, learned only the lesson that the vulnerable centers are those, first of all, that control the nerves of a great industrial organism. The Marxians themselves have learned that the ground must be prepared and the moment ripe.

Mr. Tiltman's elaborately compiled picture of the methods by which coups d'état are maintained in power is oppropriately called "The Terror in Europe." One would think after the persuasions of Signor Malaparte, that revolutions had entered an entirely new phase in which police and army, control of press and associations, and through them of elections, education, and opinion, had become matters of secondary importance. This picture of all terror at work shows the persistence of all the old state machinery of breaking up centers of resistance. It shows that Stalin has merely perfected the technique of Czarism with a more devoted and disciplined body of inquisitors and defenders. The real problem that both books leave untouched is the possibility, through control of the whole force of the modern state, of reducing religion and moral ideas to subservience to political mythology. Can a people be successfully educated into the orthodoxy of communism? Or of the less effective national myth of Fascism? Otherwise the kaleidoscope of political changes will continue to substitute merely one régime for another in meaningless action and reaction until the wisdom of constitutional liberties again returns to stabilize Europe.

The revolting details of Mr. Tiltman's picture are little known even taken, country by country, piecemeal. The "Martyrdom of the Ukraine" under Polish rule is perhaps the least known to outside opinion. The almost unprintable barbarities recorded of Pilsudski's reign there are worthy of Sienkiewicz's talent for horrors. The effects are in the main, however, those of piling up details to form an enormous mosaic of political oppression, done with some thoroughness for the whole of Europe, probably for the first time and definitively. Terror, Red, Black, White, and Green, is painted over the whole of eastern and of southern Europe with lurid strokes.

The inner meaning of this breakdown of the Rechtsstaat, with all the unleashing of savagery that it entails, does not primarily interest either of the two who have, from such curiously different angles, surveyed the new régimes of European absolutism. But it must interest those who, like Aristotle, look deeper than did the Florentine ambassador into the causes of revolution. No doubt the causes here lie very deep, deeper even than the exhaustion and bitterness of the war, than nationalistic perversion of the capitalist system, or its own inherent weaknesses. But it is to the study of the myths of politics, their rise, their decay, their conflicts, and their relations to the economic context of a madly changing world that one must turn if any way out of the nightmare land of European relapse into terror is to be found. Recitals of terror do not move men intent on survival itself; nor does a mere capture of the state solve its problems. Class and nation must be brought under the rule of law if political terror is to be banished.

The foregoing review was written before Hittler had succeeded in securing complete power in Germany. Mr. Elliott is professor of government and political theory at Harvard University.

Special to Mr. Cabell

SPECIAL DELIVERY. By BRANCH CABELL. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1933. $2.50.

MY dear Mr. Cabell:

Your friends, my dear sir, will call your book wise and beautiful and wholly delightful, avowing that you alone could have written "Special Delivery." Your enemies, if they avow anything, will equally assert that you alone could have written this book, and will ignore it as perfectly unimportant.

How ingenious, some will say, of an author to select ten letters from his correspondence, those ten most typical and most troublesome of all he receives, and to make a book of his replies, setting first the answers actually written, and then the ones he was tempted to write. It is charming that he begins with the schoolgirl requesting "particulars" of his life, and finishes with the double-chinned matron who was once, quite inexplicably, his love. How ironically he answers the others, one may say: the young woman who seeks an interview in private (with promises "not to have a baby"), the autograph hunter, the begetter of symposia, and those others, even Rhadamanthus, the reviewer of books. We are grateful, your friends will tell you, for these intimate glimpses of yourself, and if this book should lack readers, it can only be that wisdom and beauty are uncommonly at a discount.

Your enemies, my dear sir, for the most part are silent, with a silence both cruel and ominous, could your enemies be considered in any sense authorities. Only the lesser among them will denounce your lack of "social consciousness," predicting hotly of the Storisende Edition of your works that it cannot survive the Revolution, unless there be emigrés so misguided as to include it in their baggage.

But consider the others, those who mix sympathy with their aversion, who mingle a kind of awful pity with their judgment of you as "finally unimportant." To them, dear sir, you seem, rather sadly, an American who has wished to write beautiful prose, and who has only succeeded in writing prose that is hopelessly artificial and overornamented and self-conscious; in the manner of Poe, who would have liked to write beautiful prose, or in the manner of Henry James, about whose prose there are several opinions. To their finding, my dear sir, your honeyed rhythms, your novelties, and inversions are a cause for real sadness.

And even far beyond your own affirming, they affirm the flimsiness of your materials, calling them the negligible fancies of a man who plays at art for art's sake. No artist, they would have it, assures his readers again and yet again that art is less important than the "realities" which, in this book, you mention as indeed more important than art; but he will pursue these realities against every temptation to spend his career polishing "platitudes flavored with gratitude," however wonderfully and rarely he might polish them. The platitudes he attains in the end will have been hard-won. He will not have begun with them.

In this wise, my dear sir, will your enemies dispose of the wisdom and beauty of your book, and of those others, perhaps, except "Jurgen." You will, I conceive, shrug at these unconscionable persons. You will say, I suspect, that you have answered them sufficiently, in the eighteen volumes of the Storisende Edition.

But however this may be, I remain, sir,

Your humble servant,

RHADAMANTUS ROBERT MULLEN.

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Foreign Literature ✦ Points of View

A Letter from Italy

By Samuel Putnam

LOOKING back over the Italian literary year, 1932, the detached observer cannot but be impressed with the growing importance of the Genoan "renaissance." Milan, of course, has long been, if not the intellectual capital, one of the two intellectual capitals of the peninsula; while a lesser activity, and one, not infrequently more provincial in character, has prevailed at Florence, Venice, Bologna, Turin, and elsewhere. As for Rome, it has been in recent years, and continues more or less to be, the stronghold of the Marinetti Futurists and the Bontempelli Novecentisti—of those, in other words, who are concerned with a direct and immediate artistic embodiment of the Fascist urge (both Marinetti and Bontempelli being members of the Royal Academy). At Rome, too, are Signor G. B. Angioletti, who is interested in politics as well as in literature, and his organ, *L'Italia Letteraria,* which this chronicler persists in regarding as the best literary weekly in the world. But curiously enough, perhaps, with Italy's strong nationalization, the provinces appear to be coming to the fore again in the field of letters; and chief among them, Genoa.

It was inevitable that the exceedingly late political unification of the race should have left its traces; and one of these is to be found in literature, in the perduring problem of regionalism versus nationalism, quite as acute a one at times as that of nationalism versus Europeanism, which was reflected some years back, in the opposing movements, *"Strapaese"* and *"Straccità."* One hears little any more of either of these two last mentioned manifestations, and both may be said to be dead, or rather, to have been caught up into the political synthesis, Massimo Bontempelli, who once carried against Ardengo Soffici the banner of the "Supercitizens," and who even for a while published his review, *900,* in French, being now, next to Marinetti, the leading Fascist spokesman among the writers. In the same manner, within the national boundaries, the problem of regionalism has undergone a change, on the literary as well as the political side. If the political sentiment of Italy is represented, as it fairly well is, by such a group as the one about the Fascist review, *Anti-Europa,* the feeling on the cultural plane may be said to be of a similar sort—in favor, that is, of a powerful and essential nationalism. Yet it is altogether likely that the questions of regionalism or nationalism and nationalism or Europeanism will persist, at least under the surface, and that they will from time to time bob up again and take on new life. Neither of them, probably, will ever be solved, and it may be as well that they should not be, in accord with the nature of things as they are; but it is not safe for the student or critic of modern Italian literature to lose sight of either of them for very long.

In spite of the comparative smallness of the peninsula and modern means of communication, the province continues to leave its stamp, however subtly, upon the writer; and of this mark both he and his fellow-writers, his critics, and his readers are fully and often highly conscious. A case in point is the Lombard, Carlo Linati; and the same might be said of the Venetian story writer, Bonaventura Tecchi, or the Venetian poet, Diego Valeri, as of the Florentine Papini, the Sicilian Pirandello, the Sardinian Deledda, etc. This variety of provincialism, which is, rather, racialism, will doubtless remain; neither radio nor airplane can slay it, fortunately. The local theme lingers, too, as with Corrado Alvaro and his Aspromonte. And as hinted in the conclusion of the first paragraph above, there is visible today a renewed and general stir in cities other than Rome and Milan. At Florence, there is the young review, *Solaria;* at Bologna, there is Leo Longanesi's witty and satirical *L'Italiano;* while at Genoa, in addition to a young poetry group, disciples of Paul Valéry and *"poésie pure,"* with their organ, *Circoli,* there is a most interesting critical and poetical coterie, the members of which have found expression in a recently launched publication that bids fair to be a worthy successor of Vincenzo Cardarelli's *La Ronda,* which breathed its last in Rome some nine or ten years ago, but which made history while it lasted. The new monthly is called *Espero,* and is edited by Ferdinando Garibaldi, Aldo Capasso, and others. From this, it may be seen that there is much activity in what used to be known as the provinces (not to be forgotten are Filippo Burzio and a university group at Turin); but a close survey of the scene reveals the fact that this is not the old regionalism, but rather, a natural spreading of that impulse which a strong government, one which, whatever else may be said about it, knows where it is going, would seem to have communicated to the arts as to other departments of the national life.

With it all, with all the intense consciousness of *roots,* there is in the air, has been for some time in Italy, an almost equally intense cosmopolitan curiosity in literature, especially toward Soviet and pre-Soviet Russia. Enzo Ferrieri's Milanese magazine, *Il Convegno,* has been an illustrious precursor here, and its example is being followed by the Florentine *Solaria.* Longanesi's *L'Italiano,* while on the surface very, very Italian, is wide awake to what is going on in the world, and even quotes *The New Yorker;* and beneath its violent satirical attack upon the Italian bourgeoisie and the bourgeois spirit will be found, one suspects, a certain outside stimulus. And now, with *Circoli* printing Eliot's "Wasteland," as it recently did, and with *Il Convegno* printing excerpts from Joyce, comes the new *Espero* with a distinguished board of foreign editors, and with the obvious intention of printing much work from abroad and, what is more important, the work of younger and less well known writers. Closely associated with the venture is the former editor of *La Ronda,* Cardarelli, who, it may be recalled, once lined up with Soffici and Giuseppe Ungaretti against the foreign influence (Ungaretti, it is to be noted, making certain reservations). The animating spirit of *Espero* is Aldo Capasso, the peninsula's latest poet of looming proportions, who, before sharing the *Italia Letteraria* prize of a year ago with Eurialo de Michelis, for his first published volume of poetry, *Il Passo del Cigno,* had been widely known as the critic and translator of Gide, Valéry, Proust, and other modern Frenchmen. All in all, then, it would seem that any contemplated Chinese wall against "foreign influence," erected by the Strapaese adherents or others, had been by this time well battered in the breach.

Espero, nevertheless, like *Il Convegno,* which is, it may be, the most cosmopolitan of them all, is nothing if not Italian. It is here that the twentieth century Italian finds and solves his paradox; for the character of the Italian intellectual, at any rate, is almost if not quite as complex a one as the Frenchman's; he is not so conscious of it, does not talk so much about it, that is all. It has been stated that *Espero* seems likely to follow in the steps of *La Ronda,* which, incidentally, was as Italian as could be desired. The latter was started, in 1919, at a time when neo-classicism—in this case, a sometimes over-stylized neo-classicism—came as a shock: neo-classicism, classicism of any kind, on the morrow of the armistice! In the minds of many, the very name still connotes a certain preciosity and cult of the fragment. However this may be, *La Ronda* brought forth an impressive array of new talent; and as Signor Camillo Pellizzi, the historian of contemporary Italian letters ("Lettere italiane del nostro secolo") has observed, it is impossible not to be referring to it constantly in dealing with subsequent writing. That *Espero* is beginning with a consciouness of the time that has elapsed since its predecessor passed out, is indicated by a thorough threshing-out, in the second number, of the problem of *frammentismo,* with Capaso and Linati as the parties to the colloqui. From this discussion, it is evident that the "fragment," which has been the bane of the young European writer since the war, is to be given a new definition, a new meaning, one looking to a greater integrality, a more real content. It will be of esthetic interest to wait and see what comes of this.

One of the new writers of impressive stature already revealed by *Espero,* in its second number, is the poet, Elpidio Jenco, whose "Cenere Azzurra" of last summer (1932) is now followed by "Essenze," the first volume in a "Collezione degli Scrittori Nuovi" which the indefatigable Capasso, in addition to his other labors, has just taken upon his shoulders, and which is likewise published from Genoa. Other authors to appear in the series are Burzio, Capasso himself, Linati, and Alfredo Gargiulo.

"Cavalcade"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR: Allow me to voice a protest against much of the last part of the article on Noel Coward written by John Corbin in your issue of February 25th. My chief quarrel with Mr. Corbin comes in his discussion of "Cavalcade." He says that "what was written as a play is reduced in America to the dimensions of a talkie." Again towards the end he says that "Cavalcade" "bids fair to exert a similar spell here (in America) in spite of the humbler medium in which it is cast."

Now, it is our honest opinion that "Cavalcade" should be and *is* a better movie than it is a play, for plays of this episodic type are more readily handled by, and are wonderfully suited to, the screen. It should be noted, too, that Mr. Coward has written a letter to the Fox Film Corporation indicating that he himself was more than merely satisfied with the picture. Even if this letter is used as box-office advertising, its existence, at least, cannot be denied.

In another place Mr. Corbin says that in "Cavalcade" we see "the fortunes of an English household traced from the climax of the Boer War through the World War into the present Depression." Now, neither in the text of Mr. Coward's play nor in the movie is there any mention of the "present Depression" (other than in the author's usual portrayal of the *spiritual* depression of the post-war era). As a matter of fact quite the contrary is indicated. The last night club shown is as expensive and grand and altogether awe-inspiring a night club as only Hollywood can draw. And as for the Marryots being "financially with the rest of us," I utterly disclaim them. The last time we see the Marryots they are in a room with *new* curtains, a quite impressive butler — and drinking champagne! There is no mention in play or movie of economic distress.

Perhaps I should have noted at the beginning of the above paragraph that I believe "Cavalcade" was written *before* the "present Depression" had set in. So, at least, the publishers tell us.

In another place Mr. Corbin says, "At the close this mood is strangely altered. In the opinion of the producers at Hollywood, apparently, it has given way to despair. Again we must disagree. We saw no evidence of the mood having "given way to despair," in fact, quite the contrary. There was Jane Marryot's toast, triumphant in its tragic greatness. There was the friendly crowd singing "Auld Lang's Syne" in the Square. And there was the final scene of the dome of St. Paul's crowned by the Cross, illuminated and glowing. In fact, that glowing Cross—symbol of peace and hope it must be—is the very last thing we see.

Continuing in the above tone, however, Mr. Corbin says: "From time to time a ghostly cavalcade flits across the silver screen, arrayed in medieval armor and with banners flying, yet always going down hill. Neither Mr. Coward's text nor the demeanor of the very able company warrants this symbolism." In the first place we don't remember that the cavalcade was always going down hill. Mr. Corbin, too, evidently failed to notice that that cavalcade was always singing a chorus, grand and triumphant, wonderfully moving in its uplifting quality. It was, I believe, the March from "Tannhäuser." And certainly the medieval armor and flying banners make one think immediately of Excelsior! and Romance! and Glory! If the cavalcade is symbolic, at least we must doubt Mr. Corbin's interpretation.

And now we come to our final quarrel. Mr. Corbin quotes part of that last toast of Jane Marryot. That toast should never be quoted in part. It is sufficiently, in fact, remarkably brief. In its entirety it is a rare piece of emotional beauty. But that is the least of our worries, for Mr. Corbin has committed the last sin. He has misquoted. He has Mrs. Marryot hoping for "dignity and grace and peace again." Both the text of Mr. Coward's play and the scenario of the movie prefer the word "greatness" to "grace." And so do I.

David A. Dudley.
1740 Massachusetts Avenue,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Information Wanted

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR: Has anyone in his possession a log book from an American clipper that lay in Leghorn harbor in 1822? It was then that Trelawny took Shelley aboard a Greek bombard to see what degenerate Hellenes had succeeded to the ancient Greeks (he was writing "Hellas") and afterward to a Yankee clipper, whose mate, "a smart specimen of Yankee," remarked that the Greek looked like "a bundle of chips going to hell to be burnt." On board he had his first and last drink of grog, heard that there was "dry rot in all the main timbers of the Old World, and none of you will be any good until you are docked, refitted, and annexed to the New," and wrote in the ship's log, not the noble lines he quoted of Washington, but some verses, presumably his own. "That graceful craft was designed by a man who had the poet's feeling for things beautiful," said Trelawny. "Let's get a model and build a boat like her." "Then I calculate you must go to Baltimore or Boston to get one," said the mate, "there is no one on this side of the water can do the job." Has anyone her log—and Shelley's verses? H.

Mr. Cabell's Review

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

SIR: I have just read Mr. Branch Cabell's review of "Pocahontas" in your issue of February 18, 1933, and would venture to ask what an outburst of this kind is doing in a literary "fountainhead and repository of all knowledge," to which I have come to turn as one turns to a friend whose thoughts are profitable, stimulating, and pleasant to linger over.

Why all this heat? I haven't read the book, but it has been favorably reviewed elsewhere, so I infer that it doesn't wholly deserve the hard things Mr. Cabell has said about it; and if it does, why then I cannot help thinking that the gentle Princess herself, were she still alive, would be the first to remind her touchy kinsman that "privilege entails responsibility"—for poor Mr. Garnett, so far as I can gather, seems to be pilloried mainly for having taken it upon himself to write a book about her without first consulting Mr. Cabell—her cousin, and very anxious to impress us with the fact.

There may be just cause for Mr. Cabell's annoyance at the alleged liberties taken with historical accuracy, but wouldn't he have been wiser first to see to his own surely-no-less-remarkable prose before venturing (without giving any instances) the *ex cathedra* statement that Mr. Garnett writes slipshod English? It is hard to imagine that Mr. Garnett's lapses can be any worse than some of the truly astonishing specimens to be found on page 436. Does Mr. Cabell, for example, really mean to rate "the primal Strachey" among ". . . other somewhat haphazard chroniclers" (oh, Sir!), and, *totidem verbis,* to make the none too complimentary assertion that we shall all enjoy reading "inferior diction, tediousness, and all prevalent inanity?" At any rate, the violent twist to the tail administered in the concluding paragraph is, to say the least, in questionable taste, and must seem gratuitous to those who, like myself, are unaware of the reason for it. H. F. Angold.
British Commonwealth Club,
N. Y. City.

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BY THE EDITOR OF THE OMNIBUS OF CRIME

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

H. G. N., Cincinnati, O., asks what five new books, not fiction, I would choose for reading by a group willing to think.

"ADVENTURES in Ideas," by A. N. Whitehead (Macmillan), for the first. I read this in galleys and on trains—a combination against which only a great book makes way and it swept me along as if I had been hitched to the tail of a comet. About two-thirds through it gets beyond the general reader, but soon takes him on again. It is a history of civilization in terms of its great ideas; without temporizing or romanticizing he has, by sheer force of clear thinking and a happy sense of the right word, made vast subjects possible to the intelligent but unspecialized mind. There is every reason why this book should give Dr. Whitehead his widest audience.

For the second, "The Tragedy of Tolstoy," by Countess Alexandra Tolstoy (Yale University Press), of which the wonder grows that it can be at once so poignant and so temperate, so outspoken and so just. At least, from these pages anyone willing to think may get a just idea of a family tragedy with more than personal bearings.

For the third, "Prison Days and Nights," by Victor F. Nelson (Little, Brown), because its experiences coming from behind bars, it makes one think furiously on a subject rarely arousing such action in the reading public. It is not pleasant, it is not comforting to sentimentalists, but it had to be written. Perhaps the whizzing penological chapters in "Ann Vickers" will rouse an interest in it.

For the fourth, the new (second) volume of James Truslow Adams's "The March of Democracy" (Scribner), which not only makes one think about American history as of something stamping steadily toward the present hour, but illuminates its pages with any number of pictures and maps. Among the former you find again lost favorites in newspaper cartoons.

And for a jolly one at the last, "Fighting the Insects: the Story of an Entomologist," by L. O. Howard (Macmillan), the discursive, jest-sprinkled life-story of a man who has spent his life in the pursuit of bugs and liked it. His friendships are so many that the book is a gallery of notables here and abroad. I began it to find out what checked the gypsy moth in New Hampshire, and found once more how precious is a lifelong enthusiasm.

E. B. V., Madison, Wis., asks for a list of twenty-five of Balzac's best stories, long and short. I am often asked for such a list, and always pass on the responsibility to the little book by Professor George McLean Harper, "John Morley and Other Essays" (Princeton University Press). For this has an essay on the "Comédie Humaine" that includes a list of twenty-one novels *in the order* in which they may most profitably be read. This is a matter of importance for beginners, not yet accustomed to coming upon people with whose previous career they are supposed to be familiar.

"JUST above that adorable dog of yours," says K. A. W., Needham, Mass., "you answer someone who wants, among others, a book of 'words sounding alike but with different meanings.' In your answer, you refer her to the admirable 'Secretary's Guide' of C. O. S. Mawson, which has been a very present help to the undersigned in all times of her tribulation, but perhaps you do not know that in a more recent book by the same author there is a fairly exhaustive chapter on homonyms, as well as much else. This book is "The Dictionary Companion" (Doubleday, Doran), which was purchased on sight and has lived at my right hand ever since. I have never seen anything at all like it, and as an ex-teacher of English, I am always on the lookout for helps to writers, including myself. It is not just a book of reference—though it seems to contain everything a writer-in-a-hurry would ever want—but it is so interesting that one reads it through from cover to cover. If *you* do, when you come to the chapters on Aids and Origins; Roots and Branches, and the police line-up on page 39, I think you will agree with me that the book has that rare combination of sound scholarship and racy humor that one finds in Weekley—and almost nowhere else. Incidentally, there is an amusingly workable scheme for learning to spell and a syllabicated vocabulary, practically a dictionary in itself, thrown in for good measure."

H. M. S., Wellesley, Mass., says, if A. P., who asked on March 11 for letters, cares for an exotic element he might like (or even love) the "Letters from Egypt," by Lady Duff-Gordon, not the present bearer of that title but the delightful woman who died in the sixties. Lucie Austin, daughter of remarkable parents and herself generously gifted with brains, beauty, and goodness, had known the intellectual élite of Great Britain from Sidney Smith to Meredith, as a child had been the pet of Heine, and as a woman had dared to cross swords with Carlyle. Then came the lung trouble which finally killed her. With most gallant courage the beauty and wit of an English drawing-room set about making the best of ill health in a foreign land among primitive conditions, learned Arabic, made friends, and through her tolerance, kindliness, and chivalrous good-breeding grew to know the Egyptian Arab as few save Lane knew him. These letters are not only a fascinating picture of a country where, as she says, Herodotus is written over the Bible and the Koran over Herodotus, as on a palimpsest, but they are the portrait of a very brilliant and lovable character. Years ago a new edition came out with an introduction by her friend, Meredith, but I fear the letters are now out of print. Some of the larger libraries no doubt have them. Why does not one of the many reprint series make them available to the average reader?

THE Furrow Press, Brooklyn, N. Y., says that its "David the Giant Killer," by Margaret K. Soifer, and "Revolt in the Ark," belong in the recent list of recent puppet books, for, though children's plays, they are easily adaptable for marionette or shadowgraph purposes. And the *Yale Puppeteers, 34 West 46th Street, New York,* have asked me to visit their theatre and witness a performance of "Mister Noah," of which the town has been for some time talking. And *Henry L. Mason, Boston,* sends me, to be forwarded to the inquirer for musical settings of "Little John Bottlejohn," a delightful arrangement by his brother, Daniel Gregory Mason, written when he was eighteen years old—he is now in the Chair of Music at Columbia University. It is not only tuneful, but with the fresh, ringing quality that makes children sing it.

E. B. F., University of Kentucky, asks about the Poet's Guild, which will bring out an anthology of verse to be called "Poetry: the Interpreter of American Life To-day." The editor of "Poetry: the Interpreter of American Life To-day" is Miss Betty Myers of Savannah, Georgia, now a third-year student at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, N. Y. This is the anthology sponsored by the Poets' Guild, whose Executive Committee includes Robert Frost, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Anna Hempstead Branch, Mrs. Dwight Morrow, Percy Mackaye, and Robert Underwood Johnson. Student poets from every accredited college in the United States will contribute. The completed anthology will be part of a collection of verse to be exhibited in manuscript form at the World's Fair in Chicago this summer. Miss Myers was editor of last year's collection of Sarah Lawrence verse, "New-Strung Bow" (Dutton).

GILBERT DOANE, Librarian of the State University, Lincoln, Nebraska, is collecting data for a history of his native town, Fairfield, Vermont, and asks me, as a Vermonter by election, if I ever stumble over references to it to make notes for him. "Any scrap of information about people who have lived there, anecdotes of early days, *ad inf.!* Descendants of its early settlers are scattered to the four corners of the earth, and a few have achieved fame of one sort and another." One of these being Mr. Doane, at whose home in Lincoln I went to a luncheon that, all things considered, was about the top notch of entertainment I have reached on a lecture tour. Fairfieldians please take notice of his request.

Philip Guedalla, who is lecturing in this country, is to study the battlefields of the Civil War when he is in the South—presumably for a new book.

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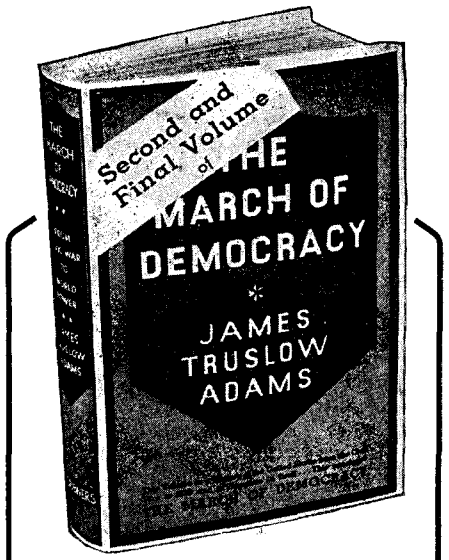

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Announcement

This week *The Saturday Review of Literature* begins to review detective and mystery fiction according to a new plan. The department appearing on the next page under the heading *The Criminal Record* is designed to cover promptly all books in this field (with the exception of obvious ineptitudes). *The Criminal Record* is inaugurated in the belief that readers of detective stories can determine the possible interest in a book more easily from this brief, classified comment than from a conventional review; that they want prompt and complete information on certain major points, rather than detailed criticism. Books which fit partially into this category but which possess wider literary value will be reviewed separately as heretofore.

Fiction

BANANA BOTTOM. By CLAUDE MCKAY. Harper. 1933. $2.50.

Raped at the age of twelve, little Bita Plant was taken in hand by the Reverends Malcolm and Priscilla Craig. Using her somewhat in the nature of a human guinea-pig, they sent her abroad to be educated at their own expense; she was to be the living exponent of one aspect of the gospel of salvation they had been preaching for years on the island of Jamaica. For seven years she was brought up as a lady, taught to play the piano, read French, schooled in the gentilities. When she returned to her native land the experiment of the Reverends Craig seemed auspiciously "successful," for the Bita who returned was a lady of refinement and gentle tastes—for music, for literature, for discussion of the topics that concerned the welfare of her race. She was eventually to supplant the missionaries at the Jubilee mission and help carry on the work to which they had devoted their lives. But they had believed environment all powerful; they had reckoned without the power of racial heredity.

This is the situation Mr. McKay sets forth, and the subsequent events he handles with integrity and a talent consistently interesting, if never conspicuously brilliant. Trained to all the amenities of polite white society, Bita, a negro Galatea, still feels powerfully the pull of her ancestry, the power of her former way of life, and the life of her people. Before the book has come to an end, the experiment has, from the standpoint of the well-intentioned but bigotted Craigs, failed miserably. They are shocked and saddened that their protégée should love and understand the more "backward" trends of her people, be politely oblivious of the ideas for which they had sacrificed so much. From the Jubilee mission house she returns to Banana Bottom, and when she finally marries, she takes "a common drayman."

Mr. McKay intelligently exploits the charm of a *milieu* fresh to most of our readers; he can create character and mood, and if he permits his narrative to be occasionally sidetracked by a little justifiable special pleading, he speaks up in a good cause. There is abundant humor in this book, and pathos; there is melodrama and the quiet charm of introspective analysis, and above all, there is entertainment.

THE STRANGER ON THE ISLAND. By BRAND WHITLOCK. Appleton. 1933. $2.

During the period of religious readjustment in the middle of the last century, many curious sects sprang up in the United States, to flourish briefly and be notorious in local history. The Mormons alone have survived in a modified state as factors in our modern life, but these episodes in our development are still remembered sufficiently to be of use to the writers of historical novels. Mr. Whitlock has chosen a group not unlike the Mormons for treatment in his new book, which is set on an island in the Great Lokes region, ruled over by a polygamous prophet calling himself King Gorel. His followers, abstemious and hard-headed traders, are not a particularly jolly crew, but for contrast the author has made the French-Canadian hero, Pierre Lenoir, fond of his rum, tobacco, and an occasional flirtation. Fleeing from the consequences of a drunken brawl in Mackinac, he finds himself on Gorel's island, where he settles down to life as a fisherman. His subsequent love affair with the wife of one of Gorel's principal henchmen is conventional enough, and its tragic outcome after a struggle with the mysterious power of this early American dictator is not unforeseen.

There is much to be said, however, for Mr. Whitlock's quiet and skillful handling of a not over interesting tale. The strange background is excellently done, without unnecessary melodramatic detail, and later the romance of Martha and Pierre has its touching moments. If it were not for the polygamous features in Gorelism, the book might almost seem to have been designed as a serious and well documented juvenile. An adult reader will find it a trifle naive, but written with genuine sincerity in the well-turned prose which Mr. Whitlock has always employed, whether for purposes of fiction or diplomacy.

MA JEETER'S GIRLS. By DOROTHY THOMAS. Knopf. 1933. $1.75.

Announced as a novel, Miss Thomas's first book is a collection of short, atmospheric sketches of the six Jeeter girls—Bell, Ella, Laura, Lizzie, Lena, Evie. These six sketches gain what little cohesion they possess as a continuous narrative, through the relation of each girl's story by Ma Jeeter herself. In homely, countryside lingo, she comments on her daughters, the affairs that led up to their respective marriages or children (not inevitably the same thing here), their personalities and childhood.

In essentials, the same pattern is repeated five times—Evie alone breaks with Jeeter tradition. The girls had a "weakness" for men; mostly their children were born shortly after they married; one of them never married, and at least two acquired their husbands through the unbeatable combination of Ma Jeeter's native sagacity and the more authentic appeal of a sheriff. Evie alone broke with tradition; she married in leisure and provided the family with an honest-to-goodness wedding, from which the other five girls drew belated, vicarious delight.

Miss Thomas has here set down an almost literal transcription of events, as told

(*Continued on next page*)

By instilling into familiar events a fresh glamor and excitement, by adding to known facts new material hitherto buried in dusty archives, by blending dramatic narrative and psychological insight in superb prose, Stefan Zweig has created in this biography a final word in history and an event in literature.

MARIE ANTOINETTE

Perhaps two or three times in a year, comes a book which *must* be read. If *Marie Antoinette* only told the long-concealed truth of a misunderstood woman and her age, it would be such a book. But the literary artistry which has gone into that telling places it among the really priceless additions to the literature of biography. *Illustrated* $3.50

***by* STEFAN ZWEIG**

Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul
April selection—Book-of-the-Month Club

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The AMEN CORNER

BEETHOVEN IN 1823
From the drawing by Von Lifer

The Oxford University Press is justly famed, among other things, for the amazing range of its inexpensive series.[1] Everybody knows the *Oxford Standard Authors*,[2] the *Oxford Miscellany Series*,[3] the *World's Manuals*,[4] the *Oxford Library of Translations*,[5] the *Tudor and Stuart Library*,[5] and especially the *World's Classics*.[6]

One of the most delightful, the *Musical Pilgrim Series*,[7] has just been recalled to us by the publication of a new volume, *Beethoven*, by Frank Howes, which coincides happily with the Beethoven cycle just now being given by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Oxonian remembers an article on "How to Appear Musical" which declared that all you had to do was to say after a concert in loud tones, "After all, Beethoven *is* Beethoven." As Mr. Howes says, "Beethoven has always been regarded (rightly) as a 'character,' a composer of strong and interesting personality, and even as a kind of philosopher. Mind and character are written clearly all over his music." Consequently he sets out to analyse the compositions of Beethoven's critical period and to show how they reflect his mind and personality. He is careful not to carry this too far: "By means of key-relationships and the disposition of themes you can construct a recognizable picture of a mental struggle, a spiritual emancipation, submission to fate, the mastery of happiness and so on, but you cannot by putting dominant and tonic harmony into sharp juxtaposition . . . signify that Napoleon has met with opposition from British sea-power or has anticipated his imperial dignity by becoming Consul for life."

He deals with the second and third Symphonies, the Emperor, and G. Major Piano Concertos, and the Violin Concerto, as well as the "Heiligenstadt Testament." In earlier volumes in the series Sir W. Hadow has treated *Beethoven's Quartets Op.* 18, and A. Forbes Milne, *Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (in two parts[8]).

Other recent titles in these authoritative little paper-backed books, which can be carried to a concert in your inside pocket, are *Strauss's "The Rose Cavalier,"* by E. Blom; *Mendelssohn's "Elijah,"* by T. Armstrong; *Strauss's Tone-Poems*, by T. Armstrong; *Debussy and Ravel*, by F. H. Shera; and *Bach's Mass in B. Minor*, by C. S. Terry.

Dr. Terry has just produced a new book, by the way, called *The Music of Bach—An Introduction*,[9] which he describes as follows: "These pages fill the gap deliberately left open in my *Bach: A Biography*.[10] They offer a plain, non-technical guide to one of the largest expanses of musical thought planned by a human brain. . . . For my purpose is . . . to relate Bach's music to the circumstances of his life, unfold its extent, offer guidance for a more intensive study of it, and incidentally engender the 'warmth of Heart' of true enthusiasm."

The Oxford University Press expects to publish this, and *Claude Debussy—His Life and Works*,[11] by Léon Vallas who is now in this country, sometime this month. They have just published another musical biography—brilliant and absorbing—of *Ferrucio Busoni*,[12] by Edward J. Dent.

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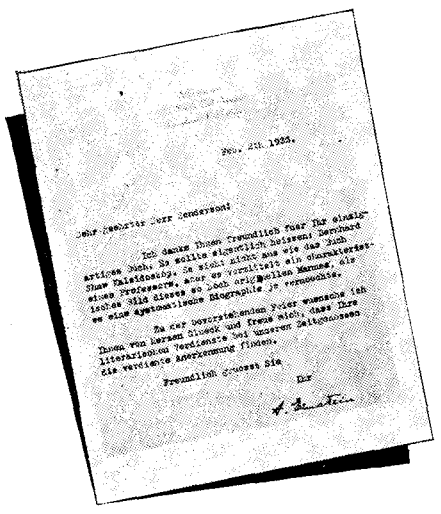

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Compiled and Edited by SIR PAUL HARVEY

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The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

Fiction

to her protagonist, the school teacher who lived at the Jeeter home. What motivation there is, is of the most primitive order, and just as there is little in the six stories of especial distinction, there is less in the telling of each tale.

Travel

THE QUEST FOR POLAR TREASURE. By JAN WELZL. Macmillan. 1933. $2.

Readers of "Thirty Years in the Golden North" will know what to expect in this book—and will get it. A mélange of adventures, some credible, some incredible, all interesting, told against a background of an Arctic which, for the men who live and hunt and dig there, is home, and familiar, and subdued to their uses. The author has the gift of tale-telling, and that naiveté which often accompanies good tale-telling. His ghost writers, who took his material and made his books (for which he seems to have got only a pittance), have succeeded in keeping this naiveté—Welzl's familiarity (which does not mean exact acquaintance) with the whole Arctic world needed no interpreter. It is apparent in everything he tells. His book is the yearning of a real old-timer, for whom long Arctic nights have supplied endless time for the exchange of anecdote. He is like his old fellow in the northern Canadian forests who came in at twenty-three and at eighty-four was still alone there, living on the game—except that Jan had two ears and two eyes always open for racy happenings, and was never weary of wandering in the attempt to make his fortune. This book is mostly gold and bears, and it is hard to tell which set of yarns is the more interesting and amusing. For sheer melodrama see the chapter on salmon, devil-fish, and trained bears.

FOOT-LOOSE IN INDIA. By GORDON SINCLAIR. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. $2.50.

This book purports to be a record of the "adventures of a news chaser from Khyber's Grim Gash of Death to the Tiger Jungles of Bengal and the Burmese Battle Ground of the Black Cobra." It may be. If not, it is just as interesting to the likely reader. Those who are so dull as to cleave to veracity as an end in itself, may distrust a certain sympathy between the young Canadian author and the Munchhausen-Halliburton school of research. For others that may well be the volume's highest recommendation.

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DRAMA

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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE TRAGEDY OF Z *Barnaby Ross* (Viking: $2).	Crooked-politician brothers meet timely but violent ends in New York state; demanding presence of Drury Lane, ex-actor criminologist.	Not the best of the alphabet soup mysteries, though with a death-house finale that raises the hackles.	Good
DEATH ON MY LEFT *Philip MacDonald* (Crime Club: $2).	Anthony Gethryn won't tell Scotland Yard who broke the British heavyweight's neck before the championship bout.	Overwritten. Transparent. Detective Gethryn does not appear till page 186. Not one of MacDonald's best.	Fair
THE TUESDAY CLUB MURDERS *Agatha Christie* (Dodd, Mead: $2).	Various and sundry—mostly murders; all parts of England; Miss Marple.	Feminine rival to Father Brown placidly knits and cleverly untangles stiff crime-twisters put to her by house-party guests. (Short stories.)	Fine
THE MURDERER OF SLEEP *Milward Kennedy* (Kinsey: $2).	Trio of stranglings in English village attracts annoyed attention of Scotland Yard man on holiday.	Rather slow-paced and a bit confused in its development. Redeemed by setting and characterizations.	Fair
MURDER AT CAMBRIDGE *Q. Patrick* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2)	Two killings in Cantab. precincts solved by American student plus local officers.	Interesting setting. Light touch. Criminal present too little in tale to make final discovery satisfactory.	Fair
THE WRONG MURDER MYSTERY *Charles Barry* (Dutton: $2)	London journalist dies from injection of pneumonia germs and Inspector Gilmartin gets his man.	Original notion gummed up by clumsy dénouement and heavy dosings of theology (*sic*).	Not so hot
FOG *Valentine Williams* and *D. R. Sims* (Houghton Mifflin: $2).	Millionaire, medium, and ship's doctor murdered on transatlantic steamer. First party's long-lost son trails killer.	You'll guess the criminal almost on first appearance but swift action will make you finish it.	Very good

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News from the States

In this department of the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE *will be gathered every two weeks or so a budget of news concerning literary and bookselling activities all over the United States. Our news will eventually cover, from time to time, every State in the Union. What the* SATURDAY REVIEW *most desires for this department is the pithy paragraph upon some significant matter, whether in relation to authors' activities, bookselling activities and problems, the trend of reading in a particular territory, or allied matters. Booksellers' anecdotes will be welcomed. The interchange of ideas is a consummation devoutly to be wished. We hope that a bird's-eye view of reading and writing America will prove valuable both to our subscribers and to the book-world at large.*

ALABAMA

The peach trees are in bloom in Alabama now and *Lewis Follett*, who contributes the items from that state printed below, also sends us a poem about a peach-tree, printed in one of his columns of *The Wanderer* in *The Birmingham News*. We have room only for the poem's beginning:

When at last I die
And you put me in my grave,
Close beside me place a tree . . .
Not a brave
Dark cedar, or an oak
But a peach, or plum, or pear—
(Maybe one of each!)
But surely let one be a peach.

William March, formerly of Mobile, Alabama, has added to the recent outcrop of war books in "Company K" (Harrison Smith and Robert Haas), which includes one short story that received the O. Henry Memorial award in 1931, and another that is included in the 1932 O. Henry collection. The book is appropriately bound in O. D. khaki, with the stamp of crossed rifles on its cover. As a member of the Marine Corps, Mr. March entered the war. He saw service in most of the engagements of the Fifth Regiment and was awarded the Croix de Guerre, the Navy Cross and the D. S. C. As soon as the war was over he proceeded with his early intention to study law, and is now prominent in that profession in New York. His writing, one imagines, is an escape, both from the present and the past.

"White Spirituals in Southern Uplands," with its lengthy subtitle, "The Story of the Fasola Folk, Their Songs, Singings, and 'Buckwheat Notes'" (The University of North Carolina Press), is a recent book by *George Pullen Jackson*, who spent his early life in Birmingham. Dr. Jackson has attained prominence as a musical critic and artist as well as in his writings, but his chief occupation is in the department of German at Vanderbilt University. He makes an interesting distinction between the mountain ballads and the "white spirituals." "The ballads are the lonesome tunes," says Dr. Jackson, "sung by individuals to stave off lonesomeness. The spirituals are the gregarious sisters of the 'ballads.'"

HAWAII

Clifford Gessler of Honolulu recounts matter that should be of special interest to *Saturday Review* readers:—

With *George Bernard Shaw* in the audience and the author on the stage in the prologue, *Christopher Morley's* dramatic fantasia "Where the Blue Begins" had its world première at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, March 16. *Arthur Wyman*, who five years ago rehearsed with Mr. Morley in Hoboken for a performance of this play there which never occurred, directed a cast of students of various racial ancestors in a production which sold out the house five nights, a record run for an amateur production in Honolulu. Mr. Wyman appeared with Mr. Morley in the prologue.

G. B. S., in Honolulu on a world tour, sat through the entire play, which, because of the difficulty of making four complete changes of scene with the limited facilities of the university lecture hall, lasted until nearly midnight. He and Mr. Morley were observed chatting between acts. Mr. Shaw is reported to have told Mr. Morley that the play had good lines, when he could understand them. He complained that the American players blurred their consonants overmuch for a British ear.

Mr. Shaw, in his tour aboard the *Empress of Britain*, has been writing a play, but declined to reveal details. "Writing plays is my profession," he said, "and I came aboard to do a little work. I don't know yet what the title will be. The title comes last."

Mr. Morley astonished Honolulu literati by his endurance the same day when he autographed steadily for an hour and a half without apparent fatigue. The Honolulu Paper Co. on that day sold out its entire stock of "Where the Blue Begins," and great inroads were made into available supplies of Mr. Morley's other works.

MISSOURI

From *Louis E. Westheimer* we gather the following:—

A book by a Missourian worthy of first honors is that lyric saga of the Indian, "Black Elk Speaks," by Missouri's eminent poet-laureate, *John G. Neihardt*. The title page of the book reads, "Black Elk Speaks—As Told to John G. Neihardt," and, while one does not doubt that Mr. Neihardt took down verbatim transcriptions of Black Elk's lengthy narrations, one can be sure that it is Mr. Neihardt who gives the epic its deep, plangent mysticism.

Other than Mr. Neihardt, Missouri can boast only the general run of minor poets, most of them youthful and practically all of them women. Any self-respecting Mid-Western state can show a similar group. True, one *Dennis Murphy*, Ozarkian born and Phi Beta Kappa bred, did win a word of praise from Mr. Neihardt and a St. Louis poetry prize recently with some "verse of the soil."

OHIO

Katharine Garford Thomas, of Elyria, supplies us with the following note:—

One seldom hears about a public official of a village resigning his post because its duties prevented him from indulging his hobby, but such was the case with *Charles Alden Seltzer* when he resigned from the mayoralty of North Olmsted, Ohio, to devote himself to his writing.

Mr. Seltzer had served that village as mayor since 1929 and during his tenure of office secured a reduced electric light rate for his village after a series of battles with the public utilities. He also established the village's own bus line into Cleveland.

Mr. Seltzer is a novelist who has been writing for twenty-five years and in that time has produced about thirty novels as well as many serials and short stories which have found a ready market. Some of his stories have been adapted to the screen.

WISCONSIN

We are indebted to *Mollie Rahr Bryan*, of Madison, for the subjoined:—

William H. Varnum, Professor of Art Education at the University of Wisconsin, is rewriting his book, "Industrial Arts Design" (Manual Arts Press, Peoria, 1916), a practical guide for designing in wood, clay, and metal for high schools and colleges. Mr. Varnum is also the author of "Pewter Design and Construction" (Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, 1926), the first book of its kind on pewter to be written.

"In writing a short story, begin as near the climax as you can," says *Travis Mason* ("Viennese Caprice," *Saturday Evening Post*, Nov. 8, 1930, "Portraits at Trevelyan House, *American Mercury*, Oct. 1932). "The necessary exposition of events which preceded the period around which the story centers can be accomplished through 'flash-back' in the conversation of the characters. The three main factors are: first, the message or theme, second, the technique, and third, style, or 'the power to touch with ease, grace, precision, any note in the gamut of human thought or emotion.' The 'surprise ending,' generally meets with editorial favor." "Prosperity Comes to Town," Miss Mason's latest story, reflects the logging days of early Wisconsin in a modern setting.

An interesting project instituted by a group of University of Wisconsin students is the publication of the Rockinghorse Chapbooks with the inscription:

"They swayed about upon a rocking-horse
And thought it Pegasus." Keats.

No. 1 issue was poems by *Martha Champion* entitled "Hellenics," No. 2 is "Eight Sonnets" including one each by *Jessica Davidson, H. Kenneth Elkins, Grace Golden, Thomas Ford, Jule Nydes, Eugene Silverman, Peter Krumble, and Miriam Berwitz.*

Three Sopranos Murdered
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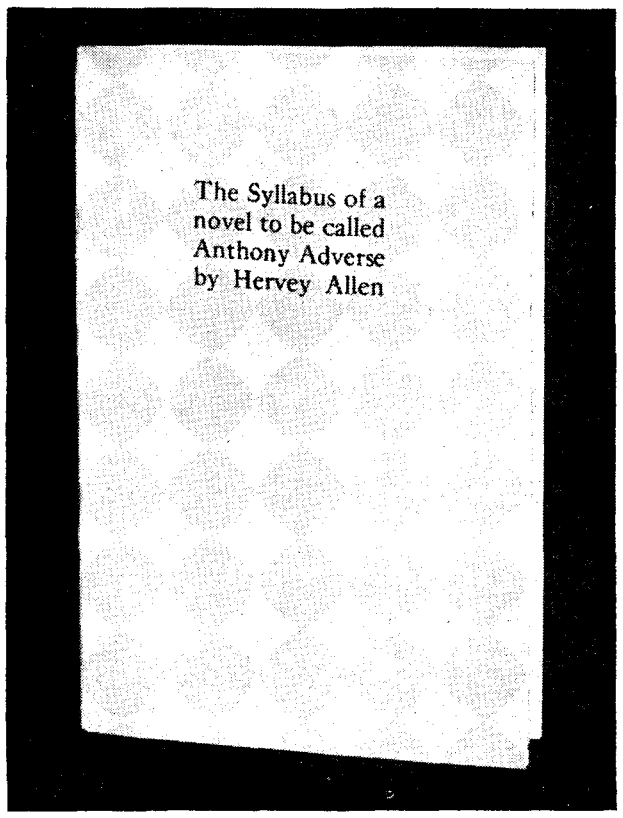

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¶ The Syllabus pictured above is a limited edition of the working outline which Mr. Allen prepared for his own use; it has been printed for limited distribution, first, because it is in itself a unique and uniquely interesting literary item, and second, because it indicates far beyond the power of any advertisement, the scope and significance and the underlying purposes of the novel, as Mr. Allen has conceived them. 1000 copies of this Syllabus were specially designed, printed on sixteen pages with a decoration by Allan McNab, and the type destroyed. Of these, 350 have been made available to the public and will be sent, on request, as long as they last.

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The PHŒNIX NEST

GEORGE FRISBEE, of San Francisco, has sent us a lot of acrostic readings from time to time, as he lectures on "Acrostics in Elizabethan England," etc. We regret that we have not space for them in this department—but acrostics are just something we can't go into within these crowded limits. . . .

Doubleday, Doran is to publish *Richard Aldington's* new novel, "All Men Are Enemies," this Spring. He has been in Portugal, whither he went due to the glowing accounts *Aldous Huxley* gave him of the life of the Portuguese country folk. We hope he found the life as described. . . .

Did you read *Edith Olivier's* "Mr. Chilvester's Daughters" back in January? Edith Olivier is one of our favorite English novelists, and we are glad to note that her books have become more and more popular in America. We cherish a volume of her "The Triumphant Footman," with her autograph on the flyleaf. In England "Mr. Chilvester's Daughters" was called "The Seraphim Room," a better title in our opinion. Miss Olivier gets some corking titles for her books, and in them she displays an imagination entirely original and individual. . . .

Arthur W. Bell's reprimand in rhyme to the Man of Porlock who interrupted *Coleridge* seems to have struck a spark in many bosoms, judging from the correspondence about it to the *Nest. Gordon Reed,* of Syracuse University, sends us a sonnet "To the Man from Porlock," and *Florence Conn* of Edgewood, R. I., pillories again "this swinish visitor who so cruelly thrust his cloven hoof into the dream-fabric of 'Kubla Khan,'" in a ballade. Her refrain is, "A gentleman from Porlock knocks and knocks." All of us who try to do any creative work in the world have experienced our own gentlemen from Porlock, those bland and asinine interrupters—even though the importance of our work can hardly vie with Coleridge's. We are sorry we have not room to print the sonnet and the ballade here. . . .

Norah James, the English novelist, has put herself on record as believing that "writing should be a second string to some other job; otherwise you lose touch with life, and then you become too much concerned with the material success of your books." Miss James has followed her own precept, having been a sculptor, a trade union organizer, a political secretary, and the advertising director of an English publishing house. At present she acts as English agent for some American publishers. . . .

We thank *Mrs. Mary B. Sandberg* of Glen Ellyn, Ill., for her lines about *T. S. Eliot,* written just after passing her seventy-seventh birthday. We cannot quite agree with her about Eliot's "Hippopotamus," as we think it is a perfectly swell poem. . . .

We thank *Miss Helen Leighton,* of Brookline, Mass., for sending us "The 1033d Psalm," "The Politician is my Shepherd," but unfortunately we have already heard this in several versions, and it has been pretty widely circulated. . . .

Irene Wilde of Los Angeles favors us with the following "Protest" which seems to us timely:

Urge me not in spring
To fix my eyes on things of heaven;
Some other season, please—
It is not meet
When sweet alyssum white as milk
Spilled on the earth
Froths to a nebulous galaxy
At my feet.

Well, we see that *Hugh Walpole* has polished off the Herries family with the fourth and final volume, "Vanessa," and has been holidaying in Jamaica, which means that he has plunged into a new novel of modern London. Doubleday, Doran will bring out in June a volume of his short stories, "All Souls' Night." "Vanessa" will appear in the Fall. We marvel at the prolific force of these novelists. If we ever wrote a novel it would take us about six years, we think—and then we'd be sick and tired of the darn thing. We know it's the order of the day, and that publishers have got novelists hypnotized into the "book-a-year" routine, and novelists have turned into manufacturers of a staple product and have to keep their name and wares before the public. But when you look at it from a detached point of view, it does seem odd that practitioners of a fine art should be expected to be methodical business men. It's idiotic! It accounts for the great deluge of trash, mediocrity, and ephemera that almost swamps the book market. This is not apropos of Walpole, who is a natural-born writer, although one could dispense with a lot of his work, by preference retaining only the best. But we've seen the practice spoil writers with native gifts and turn them into machines baking bread for the populace, or rather concocting pastries which ruin the popular digestion for the honest meat and bread of good literature. But as publishing houses grow large, their presses have to be fed and their large staffs paid. So more and more books must be produced. The tendency in America has been—energetically practical as we are, or think we are—to try to organize publishing like any other big business. But the publishing business is no more a regular business than is the "show business." That is the whole trouble. . . .

We read a lot of trash, ourself, in current magazines and in current books, but we'd rather not if we could get better. The good stories and books do occur occasionally, but a lot of them are lost in the deluge. Oh, well, we'll get down off the soapbox! . . .

Before he left for parts west including Hawaii, our confrère, *Chris Morley,* left with us a copy of *The American Oxonian,* remarking that we might be interested in an item on page 27. We are, because there begins an article entitled "Verdant Green" or "A Book Written in Spite of Itself." We wonder how many of the present generation know anything of *"Cuthbert Bede's"* masterpiece? We read it as a boy, and just recently an uncle of ours told us that when he was at Yale, some years before we even existed, it was an influence in his life. . . .

"Cuthbert Bede," is seems, was really the *Reverend Edward Bradley,* Rector of Stretton. The author wrote of the Oxford of eighty years ago. That is, in at least two of the books about Verdant Green, he did. And, peculiarly enough, he was not even an Oxford man! From St. Cuthbert and St. Bede, the two patron saints of Durham, where he matriculated, he drew his pseudonym. He *resided* at Oxford for about a year, however. He did his own illustrations. In fact, the illustrations came first and the text was written around them! It seems that by today more than a quarter of a million of the first "Verdant Green" book have been sold, and it is now truly a classic. But the Reverend Edward Bradley received three hundred and fifty pounds in a lump sum for it, and his remuneration ceased there! He was no business man. He was a clergyman. If "Verdant Green" enthusiasts want to see the article of which we speak, written, by the way, by *Carroll A. Wilson,* they should apply to the editor of *The American Oxonian, A. C. Valentine,* at Pierson College, New Haven, Connecticut. . . .

We have an interesting letter from *Earle F. Walbridge* concerning his "internal evidence" as to the authorship of "The Gold Falcon," but must hold it over till our next issue. . . .

Cyril Clemens of the International *Mark Twain Society* wishes us to tell you about their contest of this year. The Society is offering a prize of twenty-five dollars for the best short essay of approximately five hundred words on the subject, "Whom I Consider the Best Living Novelist of My State—and Why." If any state has no living novelist *residing* within its borders, one from a neighboring state may be chosen. All essays must, by September first, reach the International Mark Twain Society, Webster Groves, Missouri. . . .

The annual subscription dinner of the Friends of the Princeton Library, to be held at The Plaza, at 7.30 Thursday evening, May 4th, will have as a special feature the first public announcement of the 1932 Pulitzer Prize winners in Letters. All those who have previously received Pulitzer prizes in Letters have been invited as guests at the dinner. Thirty-two of these authors have already accepted. The National Broadcasting Company will broadcast an hour of the program over a coast-to-coast hook-up.

THE PHŒNICIAN.

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